Commentary

Volume Fifty-four, Number Three, September 1972

McGOVERN NIXON & THE JEWS

Nathan Glazer
Milton Himmelfarb
Norman Podhoretz

Needing Niebuhr Again / Michael Novak

From Globalism to Isolationism / Walter Laqueur

"Serrano" vs. the People / Chester E. Finn, Jr. and Leslie Lenkowsky

On "The Sorrow and the Pity" / Stanley Hoffmann

The Hitchcock Problem / William S. Pechter

An Exchange on Population Control / Samuel Mc Cracken & Critic

BOOKS IN REVIEW: Frederick Garber / Joseph W. Bishop, Jr. / Ellen Moers
Barry Gewen / Alan Goldfein

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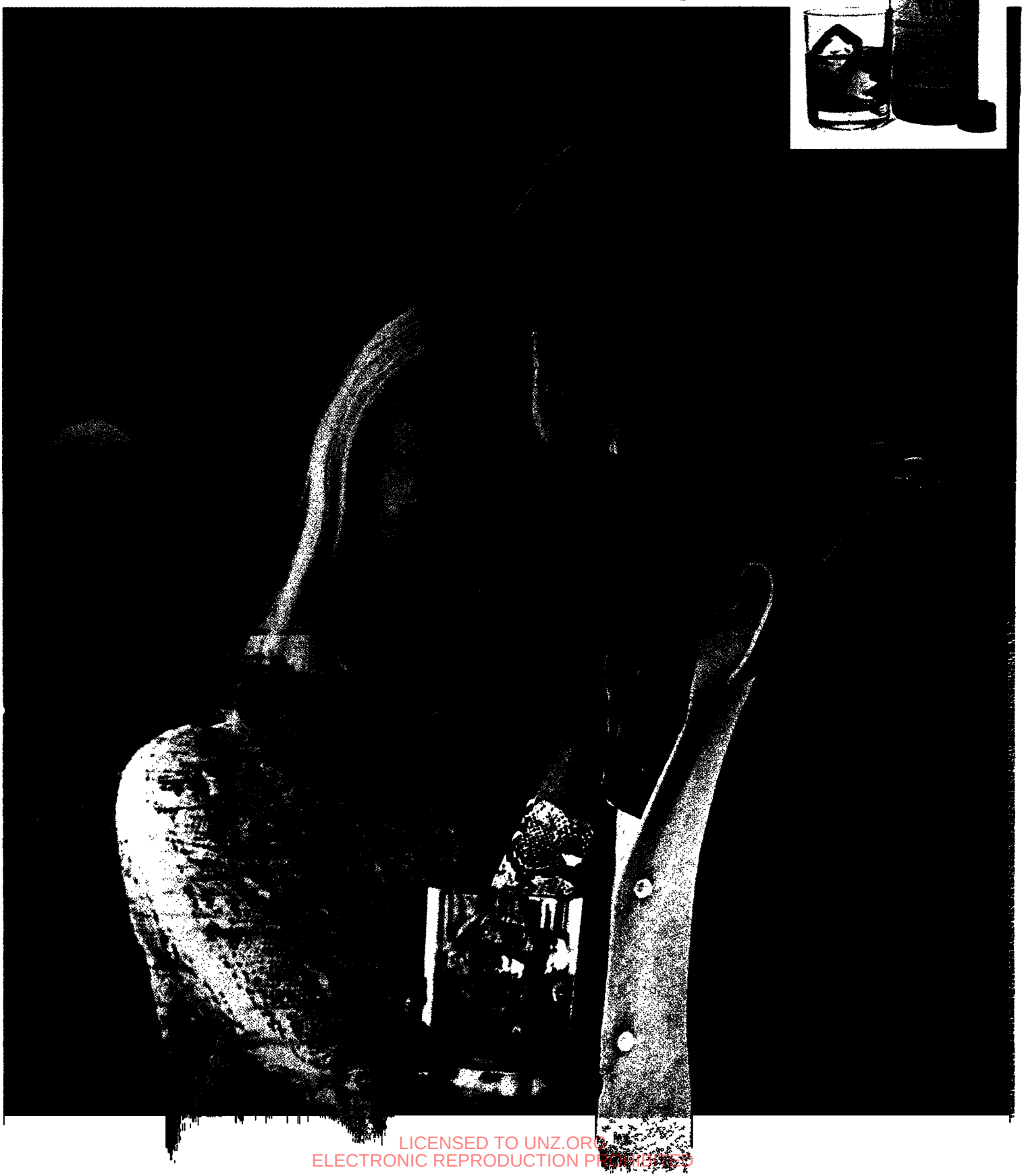

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Issues

Between Nixon and the New Politics

Norman Podhoretz

ALTHOUGH Nathan Glazer (p. 43) is for McGovern and Milton Himmelfarb (p. 48) is against him, they both expect that Jews will give a smaller majority of their vote to the Democratic candidate this year than they have ever given to a Democratic candidate in any recent Presidential election. The normal pattern has been for Jews to give between 80 and 90 per cent of their vote to the Democratic Presidential candidate; this year the figure is widely expected to go below 70 per cent and could even, some say, go below 60. One also hears that a certain number of wealthy Jews who have contributed heavily to Democratic Presidential candidates in the past are either planning to sit this election out or to throw their financial support to Nixon.

Does all this mean that the Jews are beginning to move into the Republican party? I think not—or at least not necessarily. In my opinion, the turn away from McGovern has been caused not by a sudden access of Jewish enthusiasm for Nixon or his party, but by a steadily mounting Jewish uneasiness over McGovern. I think, moreover, that to understand this uneasiness fully, one has to look not only at the two issues of Israel and quotas which Mr. Glazer and Mr. Himmelfarb between them so exhaustively discuss, but also at the character of the "McGovern phenomenon" as a whole. For everything in this discussion depends on whether the forces led by McGovern will retain control of the Democratic party or whether they will indeed prove to be, as many people have predicted, the Goldwaterites of the Left.

THAT Richard Nixon inspires dislike among liberals and even hatred is hardly news, and it is hardly necessary to show in detail that in the course of his pre-Presidential career he generally spoke and acted in such a way as to deserve this response. Even as President he has done many things calculated to infuriate liberals. He has unleashed Agnew, he has taken a tough line on civil disobedience and direct-action protest, he has invaded Cambodia, he has intensified the air war in North Vietnam, he has appointed conservatives to the Supreme Court, he has come out against busing.

Yet it is also true that in the course of his career as President he has done more and more to deserve, if not the affection of liberals, then at least a diminution of their dislike. He has proposed a guaranteed annual income, he has instituted wage-and-price controls, he has withdrawn half-a-million men from Vietnam, he has enunciated a foreign-policy doctrine involving a lesser degree of American intervention in international disputes, he has visited Communist China, he has negotiated an arms-limitation treaty with the Soviet Union and possibly also (if such surprising developments as the move toward unification of the two Koreas and the departure of Soviet troops from Egypt are anything more than coincidence) the beginnings of a long-range political settlement. On balance, surely, it makes more sense for Nixon's old supporters in the conservative camp like William F. Buckley, Jr. and Richard J. Whalen to feel betrayed (which indeed they seem to do) than it does for liberals to go on hating him as much as *they* seem to do. Nevertheless liberals do go on hating him, less perhaps than they used to but still much more than, on the record, they rationally should.

And if this is the case with lib-

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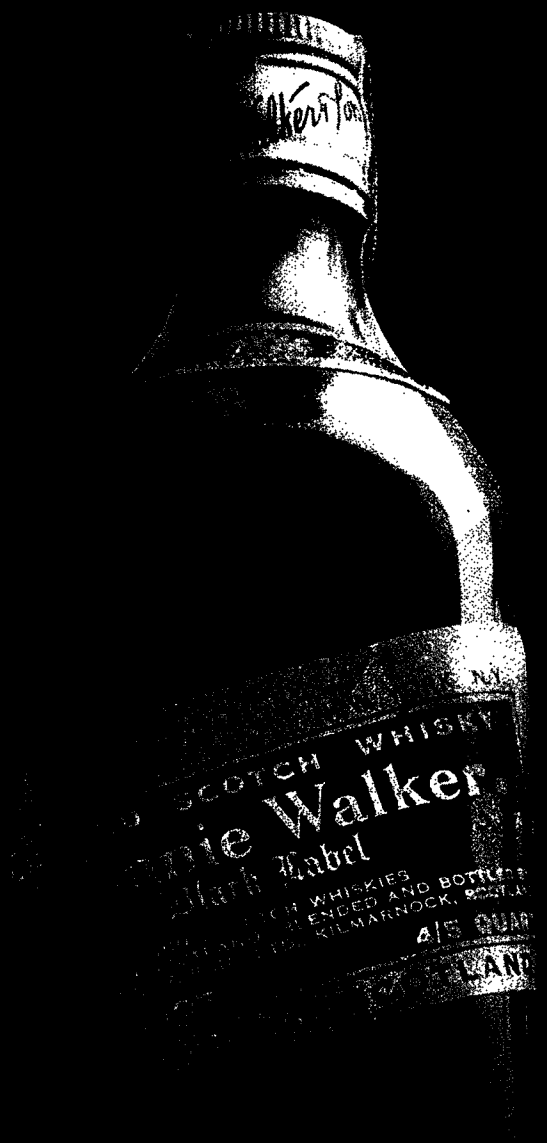

As you're fighting your way to the top
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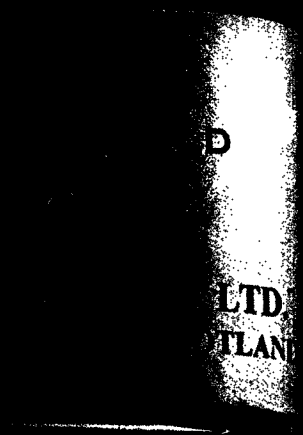

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erals in general, it is also the case with Jews, who are still one of the most liberal groups in the country (for even if the most wildly pessimistic forecasts from the Democratic point of view were to prove accurate, it would mean that "only" 60 per cent of Jewish voters were going for McGovern—a higher percentage than he is likely to get from any other group except perhaps the blacks). Jews as liberals share in the general liberal dislike of Nixon, and Jews as Jews, often with an even lesser degree of rationality, dislike him on their own. The Israelis say that Nixon has done more for them than any American President before him, and yet in speaking before Jewish audiences I have repeatedly been asked what I think makes the Nixon administration "anti-Israel." More Jews have been appointed to powerful positions within the Nixon administration—one has only to mention the names of Henry Kissinger, Arthur Burns, and Herbert Stein—than has probably ever happened before, and yet I have repeatedly been asked by these same Jewish audiences whether the "fact" that there are no Jews in the Nixon administration means that the President is anti-Semitic. For just as blacks seem not to realize that it is under the Nixon administration that the dual school systems of the South have finally been abolished, and that the concept of "affirmative action" has been turned into a means of instituting a quota system mainly in the black behalf, so Jews seem not to realize that the Nixon administration has been friendly in a variety of important ways to them.

To complicate matters even further, those Jews who worry about quotas and who oppose McGovern because he appears to favor them, seem not to realize that it is under the *Nixon* administration that quotas have become a threat. But this is only one of many indications that the Jewish uneasiness over McGovern is not to be fully explained with reference to specific issues, any more than the probable loss he will suffer of normally Democratic Jewish votes is to be explained by a newfound Jewish fondness for Nixon. The specific issues are certainly real and the concern over them is certainly genuine, but there is, I believe, something larger and more difficult to define for which they serve as a manageably concrete, though not altogether satisfactory, stand-in. This something is the New Politics.

By the New Politics I mean the insurgency within the Democratic party which came out of the anti-war movement and which, having lost its chance to capture the party in 1968 either through Eugene McCarthy or through Robert Kennedy, found a second chance in the reforms developed by the McGovern Commission and then seized it through the candidacy of McGovern himself. The nature of the New-Politics movement is easy enough to describe in sociological terms. The movement is made up largely of educated, prosperous people, members of the professional and technical intelligentsia and their wives and children, academics and their students: the group, in short, as Michael Novak (p. 52) reminds us, that David T. Bazelon presciently identified as a New Class long before it came to consciousness of itself as a class and as a potential political force. Thus for all the self-gratulatory speeches about the unprecedented "representativeness" of the 1972 Democratic convention, a survey by Haynes Johnson of the Washington *Post* showed that fully 39 per cent of the delegates—as compared with 4 per cent of the population as a whole—held postgraduate degrees, and that 31 per cent had incomes of more than $25,000 a year, whereas only 5 per cent of the population as a whole is in so high an economic bracket.

But if the sociological character of the New-Politics movement is clear, its political or ideological character has been obscured somewhat in the process of its transformation into the McGovern "populist" movement. Lately the talk has all been of tax reform and the redistribution of wealth, but this was not an issue indigenous to the New Politics or to the "McGovern phenomenon"; it was taken over

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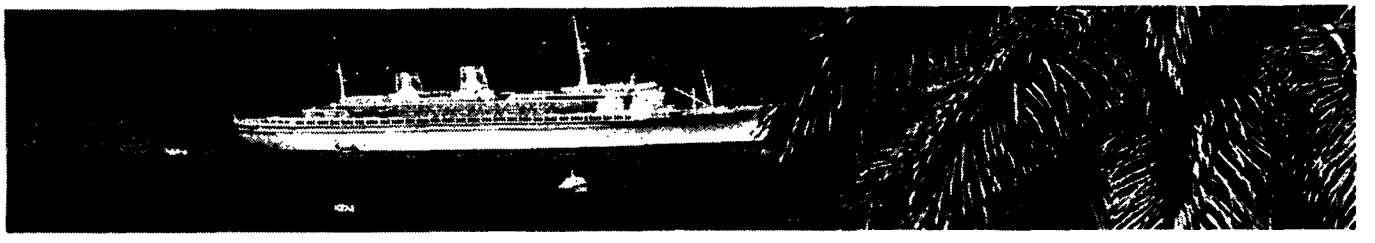

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from George Wallace, and the carelessness with which the McGovern proposals have been thought out is perhaps a sign of the fundamental indifference to such matters which the New-Politics movement until so recently felt. For what this movement really cares about is not the distribution of economic power but the distribution of political power. It wishes to "participate in the decisions that affect our lives" and it wishes to govern, but it has no clear idea of what, in addition to participating and governing, it wishes to do. Consequently it has *itself* become the issue. Why has the AFL-CIO, which until the nomination of McGovern obsessively kept declaring that its main political priority was the defeat of Nixon, refused to endorse McGovern? Asked this question, George Meany and I. W. Abel and the other anti-McGovern labor leaders fish for unconvincing explanations in McGovern's voting record, when what is actually bothering them is the hostility of the New Politics toward organized labor ("It isn't worth the powder it would take to blow it up," I once heard a leading McGovern strategist say of the labor movement) and the contempt of the New-Politics people for the ordinary workingman and the "racism" and vulgar materialism which allegedly define his character.

So too with those Jews who are bothered by McGovern. They are bothered in my judgment much more by the general attitudes of the New-Politics movement than by McGovern's stand on Israel—which, after all, as Nathan Glazer points out, is by now as fervent as any friend of Israel could wish—or by his stand on quotas: after all, the Nixon administration has done more to further quotas by deeds than McGovern could possibly yet have done by words. But the Jews who are bothered by McGovern sense that the movement of which he is presently the head represents the entry into the political mainstream of that widespread antagonism toward the Center and its "middle-class" values which grew into so vivid a presence in American life and culture over the course of the 60's; and they see in that antagonism not only a denigration of them, of their achievements and their aspirations, but a threat to their future position. This is why a relatively large number of Jews will almost certainly refuse to vote for McGovern, even if—as will surely happen in many instances—they should decide not to vote for Nixon either.

In other words, if there should be a large-scale defection of Jews from the Democratic ticket this year, it would not necessarily signify the birth of a permanently substantial Jewish Republican vote. If the McGovern candidacy should indeed turn out to be a counterpart of the Goldwater candidacy of 1964, with the electorate severely punishing the Democrats now for challenging the Centrist consensus from the Left as it punished the Republicans then for challenging it from the Right, the Democrats would no doubt do in their catastrophic defeat what the Republicans did after theirs in 1964. They would move once again toward the Center, politely overriding their now discredited and demoralized insurgents in the process (just as Nixon has quietly ignored the protests of the Goldwater Right against many of his foreign and domestic policies), and renewing their appeal to groups like the Jews whose repudiation of the insurgents would have contributed to the size of the defeat.

If, on the other hand, the projections of the McGovern strategists should be vindicated and McGovern, carried along by a new coalition of blacks, youth, and women, should win *despite* the defection of traditionally Democratic groups like the Jews, there might then very well come about one of those periodic realignments which C. Vann Woodward and other historians tell us is long overdue, with a sizable number of Jews and other former Democrats now turning to the Republican party in the hope of finding or creating a reconstituted Center there. For if America should "come home" to the Democrats under McGovern, many whose home is the Center would no longer be at home with the Democrats.

In either case, we would all know better than anyone knows today where the country is, how it feels, what it wants. In the event of a McGovern victory, even a narrow one, we would know that the McGovernites are right when they say, in the words of Arthur Schlesinger, Jr., that "disgust with the way things have been recently managed in this country, the recoil against the Establishment, the pessimism about the national future, the desire for unspecified . . . change . . . infect every bloc in the nation." By contrast, in the event of a catastrophic McGovern defeat, we would know that the anti-McGovern forces, both Republican and Democratic, are right when they say that such feelings are still confined to an ideologically passionate minority (what the *Wall Street Journal* sometimes calls the "mass intelligentsia" and sometimes the "modernist-academic elite"); that most other people, if they are really infected with disgust, are disgusted not with the "Establishment" in general but precisely with that wing of it dominated by the New Class and the New Politics; and that the great majority of Americans believes the country is already "home," that the structure of the house is sound, and that what it mainly needs is patching and sprucing up to a greater (if they are liberals) or lesser (if they are conservatives) extent.

If, however, the Democrats under McGovern should neither win nor be decisively defeated—if, that is, Nixon should be re-elected by a very close margin—everything would remain uncertain, unsettled, and bitterly polarized, for the Jews and for everyone else.

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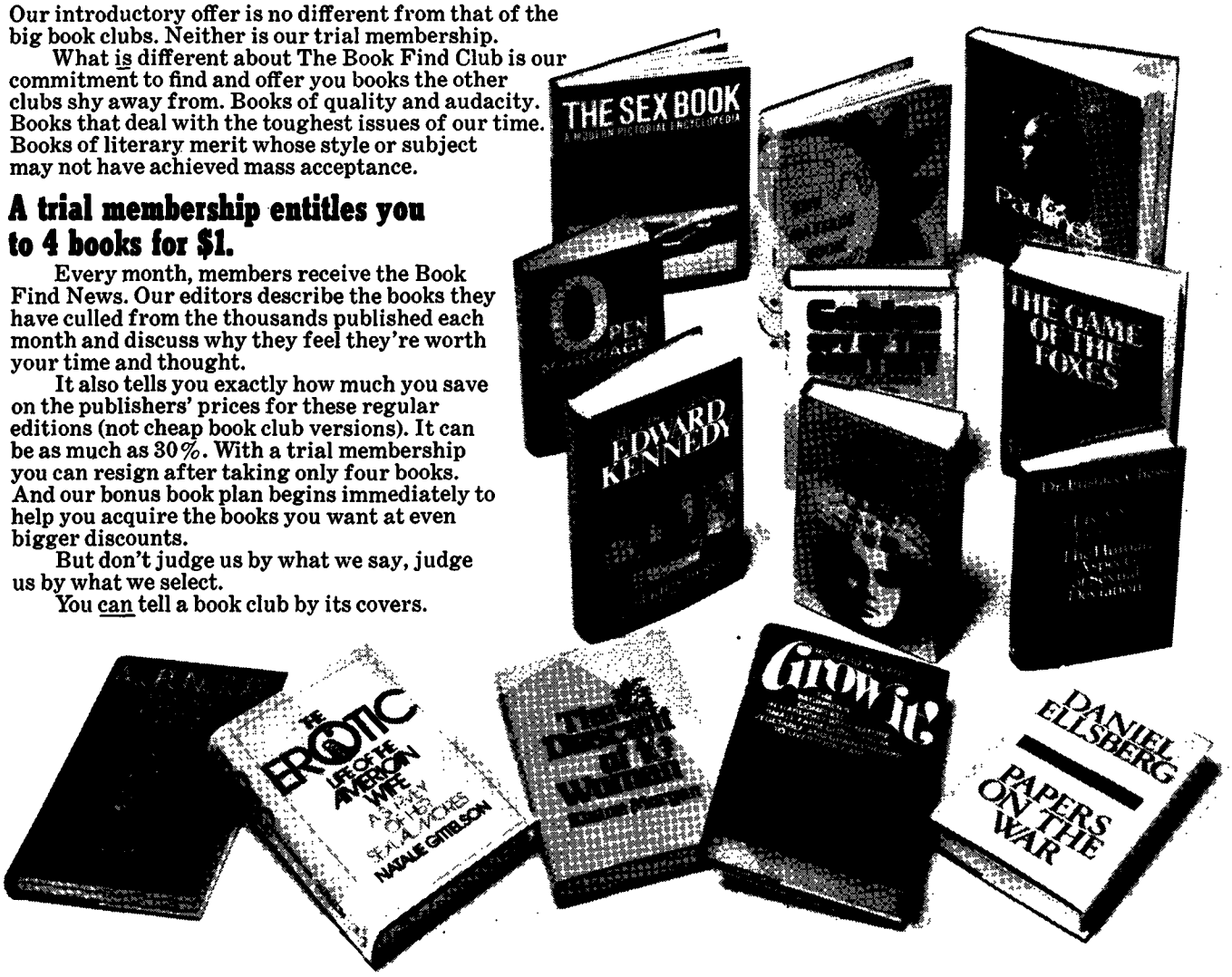

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Letters from Readers

Population Control

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

At one time, and actually not too long ago, demography was a reasonable and responsible discipline, protected from outsiders by the slight but seemingly forbidding technical mastery one had to pay to enter. Now it has been invaded by a tribe for whom Burckhardt might have coined the term "the terrible simplifiers." How low it has sunk is indicated by the fact that Samuel McCracken ["The Population Controllers," May], whose competence is in literature and the humanities, writes with better sense than one can find in most of the best-sellers he discusses. What I offer is less criticism of his article than emendations to his argument.

Probably by intent, Mr. McCracken has concentrated his attack on a noisy but slight group. By skimming the scum from a very mixed pot, he has neglected the solid nutrients still to be found there. He cites the collection of claptrap edited by Daniel Callahan, for example, but does not mention the excellent pieces by Ansley Coale, Judith Blake, and Frank Notestein that somehow found their way into that miscellany. The public has too often taken the Mark Rudds as representative of students, the Black Panthers as representative of blacks; it would be unfortunate if Ehrlich and the Paddocks were interpreted as more than they are.

Having begun with extremist programs, Mr. McCracken has fallen into the trap of replying in kind. His anecdote about John and Mary Unenlightened, though intended as irony, I found indeed to be unenlightening. One cannot wish away the dilemma posed by a family-population policy with the specter either of imminent world starvation or of a totalitarian society imposed to avoid that disaster. More is required than dramatic flourishes.

Parents have the right, correctly in my opinion, to decide on the number of their children. But the sum of those decisions constitutes the major element in population growth, which is a significant component of national welfare. Society, then, has the right to set conditions that affect parents' decisions on whether or not to have another child. One tries to solve the problem of delineating those conditions in terms of three unknowns (and the word is to be taken literally): the optimum size and rate of growth of the population, according to any criteria one sets; the future trend of the population independent of any intervention by the state; and the overall effect on fertility of any policy that is adopted. Given the wide range and full depth of our ignorance, it becomes a democrat to move with delicate care into that sanctum of personal freedom, the family, and the relation between man and wife, parents and children.

In a country like the United States, where the situation—to put it no stronger—is not desperate and where the trend seems to be in the desired direction, the appropriate stance would seem to be abstention. Neither prohibit abortions and voluntary sterilizations nor set up state contraceptive and abortion clinics. Neither give husbands a draft exemption nor subsidize the marriage of students with publicly-financed, especially expensive, married-students' dormitories. Neither inhibit married women from working outside the home nor help them to evade deciding between two career lines by furnishing them with child-care centers to be paid out of tax funds. In sum, neither restrict the freedom of potential parents' choice nor reduce the personal responsibility which that choice properly entails. Such an abstention from policy would hardly face up to the problem that a country like India faces. And whether in the longer run it would suffice in the United States no one knows, least of all the authors whom Mr. McCracken discusses.

According to two of the contributors to the symposium edited by Dr. Callahan, "most of our tensions and our failures [in the United States] are directly due to an unrestrained, spiraling population growth"; and the United States is the world's "most seriously overpopulated nation . . . by a substantial margin." In taking asseverations like these seriously, Mr. McCracken cannot help but move toward this level of polemics. One should ask rather why it

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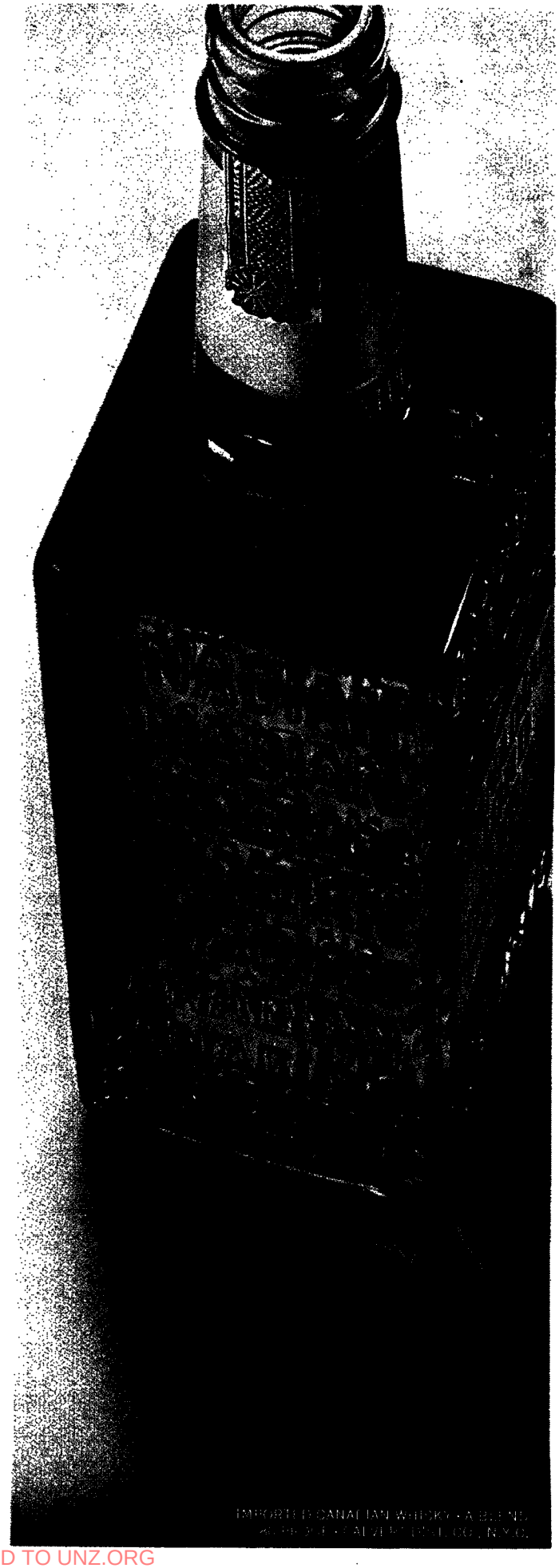

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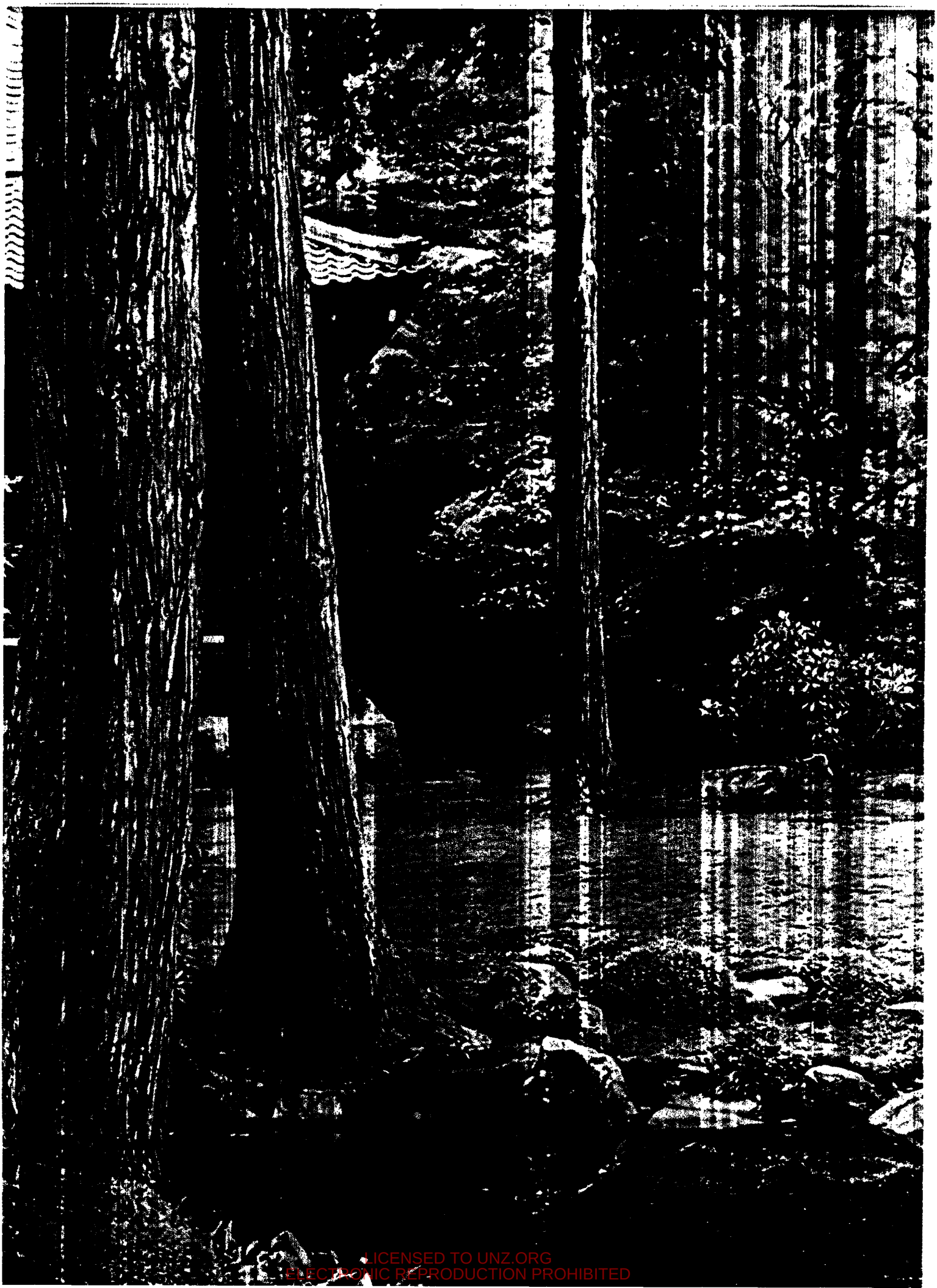

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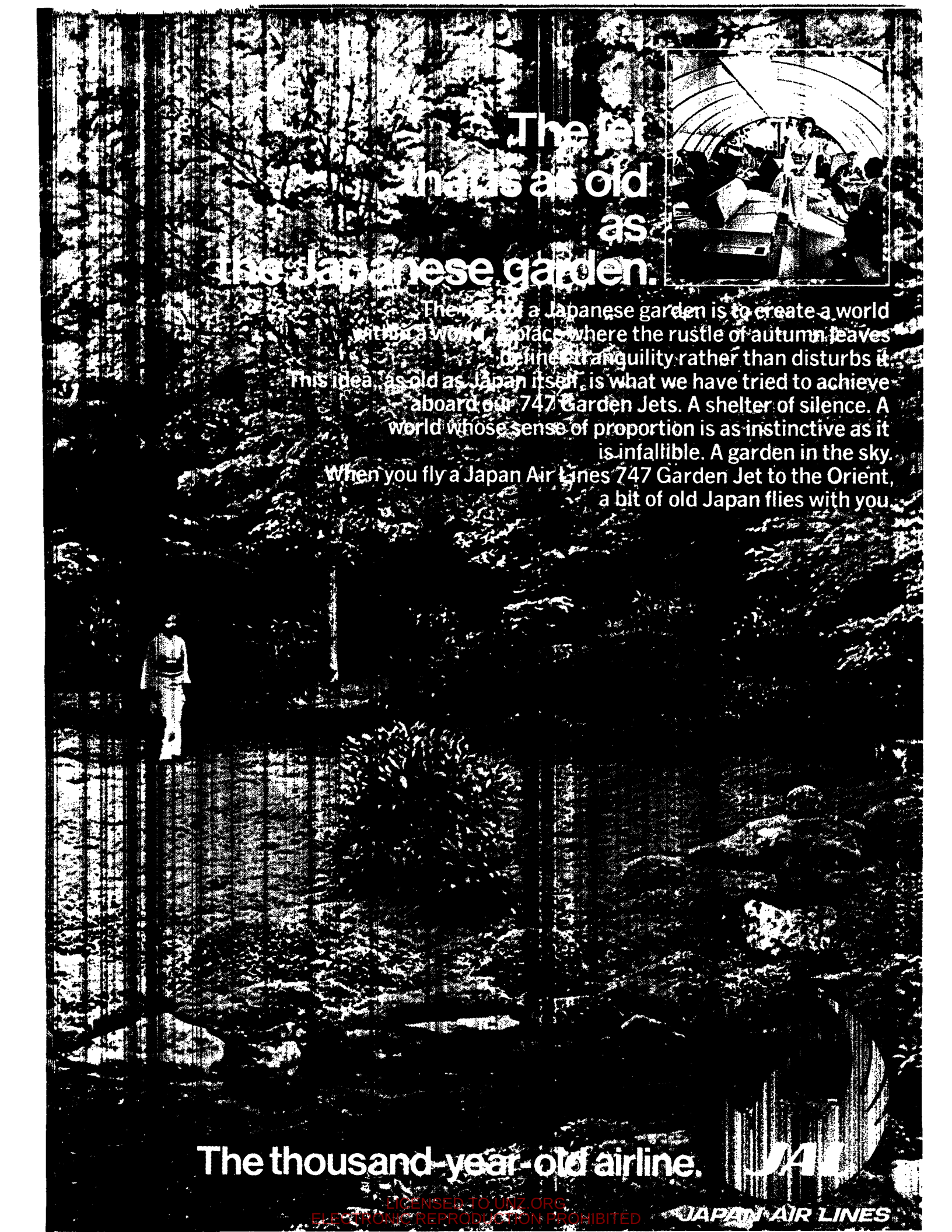
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should be that in an affluent and thinly settled country, during a sharp and unanticipated decline in fertility, such palpable nonsense should have gained some currency. The important point about the 1960's was the movement not of the birth rate but of academic politics. In every learned society, on every major campus, a minority of yahoos was given a rostrum from which to attack any and every characteristic of American society. What better, more comprehensive denunciation could they find than to equate industrial growth with pollution, the family with degradation, the workings of the whole system with spoliation? No pollution has been more harmful than that of rational discourse, and the eco-freaks, among others, should be called to account.

WILLIAM PETERSEN
Robert Lazarus Professor of Social Demography
Ohio State University
Columbus, Ohio

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Samuel McCracken says many things that badly needed saying. . . .There has been much that was frightening about the more zealous proponents of population control and the doctrinaire "remedies" they prescribed for ills which, at the very least, were poorly defined. It seems particularly ironic that the kinds of totalitarian measures Mr. McCracken discusses were being promoted as matters of the direst urgency at precisely the same time that, entirely through voluntary means, the nation's fertility level was being reduced to a point where the number of children born to each family was barely sufficient to replace the parents. Thanks to articles like Mr. McCracken's, perhaps we may not have to undergo the drastic "cures" of the population controllers—one of whose more extreme representatives told me that the ideal size of the world population would be 100,000 persons and suggested that "any means necessary" should be taken to achieve this end within our lifetime.

Why the public was not made aware of the downward fertility trend much earlier is a question which troubles me—particularly since fertility has been declining quite consistently, with only minor fluctuations, from 1958 to the present. It may be that even some influ-

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ential demographers had been indoctrinated (or intimidated?) by the population-control movement to the point where they believed that it was dangerous for the public to know the truth. *The Baby Bust*, the report of the Washington Center for Metropolitan Studies, which Mr. McCracken cites, elicited an emotional response from population scientists that is hard to explain on other grounds. They reacted as if we had attacked them. And it is difficult, particularly in view of the latest available statistics, to understand why some of them refuse even now to acknowledge the *possibility* that the national fertility pattern may have undergone a long-term change comparable to that which had previously occurred in a number of other "developed" nations.

While nobody knows what the future course of the fertility curve will be, the fact that it has reached its present low level through voluntary means is hopeful in itself —and the fact that there remain authors like Mr. McCracken and journals like COMMENTARY may present the best hope of all that man will somehow survive all those of his race who keep trying to do him good whether it kills him or not.

GEORGE GRIER
Vice President, Program Development
Washington Center for Metropolitan Studies
Washington, D.C.

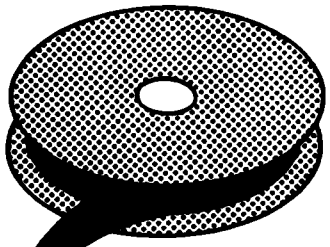
TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Since Samuel McCracken raises the specter of Nazism against the "Population Controllers," as he calls us, I don't think I have to apologize for pointing out that he himself uses the Big Lie technique, one of Hitler's favorite devices, to smear us by quoting from obscure extremists. To read his article, and Norman Podhoretz's "Beyond ZPG" in the same issue, one would think that Martha K. Willing and some others of similar "ethos," to use their word, were leading lights in the movement. As president of NON (the National Organization for Non-Parents), I either know personally, or know of, the leaders of the various organizations who are concerned about overpopulation, and I have never heard of most of those Messrs. McCracken and Podhoretz cite as typical of the movement.

The one recognized leader Mr. McCracken does quote from, Paul Ehrlich, has already answered all his arguments in his book, *The Population Bomb*. But though Mr. McCracken quotes from this book, and takes pot shots at it, it is obvious that he has not read it. . . .For example, he admits that perhaps there might be a population problem in Bangladesh, but hardly one in the United States. But Ehrlich points out that not only are people starving in the United States, but that our industrial society pollutes and consumes forty times more, per capita, than does Bangladesh or India. (And we're also far ahead of the more densely settled northern European countries Mr. McCracken mentions.). . . .

I just want to emphasize that neither NON nor ZPG (Zero Population Growth, Inc.) nor any other leading group or authority concerned with population advocates anything but *voluntary* birth control. NON believes that parents should have children because they *want* them, and not because they are coerced into it by society. (The divorce explosion and the child-abuse explosion are both traceable directly to heedless propagation.) We are not against children, but we believe that the world might be a better place for the children who are born if more couples choose to remain child-free.

Mr. McCracken also repeats the popular misconception that our fertility rate is slowly reaching the 2.1 level, and that this means zero population growth. What he overlooks, and Ehrlich points this out in his book, is that even this "replacement" level of births would mean that the U.S. population would continue to grow for the next thirty to fifty years, from our present 209 million to 310 million people. *The United States cannot accommodate another 100 million people. Our air, water, and other life-support systems will not stand the pressure.* And neither will the human nervous system. Overcrowding might easily lead to horrors we have not even begun to imagine—have you heard what happens to laboratory animals or to people crowded into the slums of large cities? The Nazi-like nightmares Mr. McCracken alludes to



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are just as nightmarish to us. It is the worst sort of irresponsibility to attribute the problem to the very people who are trying, through voluntary means, to solve the problem.

WILLIAM A. PECK
President, National Organization for Non-Parents
Palo Alto, California

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Samuel McCracken abhors the idea of a few people setting themselves up as an elite who have the right to tell the rest of us what to do—at least he abhors the idea when these people are (in his mind) Paul Ehrlich and his "colleagues," who are, after all, "uncritical amateurs." Mr. McCracken would rather leave the problem to the "experts." But who are the experts? What if the "experts" decide, when they do get around to deciding (which may be a long, long time), that the population problem is a "state of emergency"? What if they decide that the only solution is complete government control? "Experts" have decided in favor of totalitarian governmental control before, as Mr. McCracken knows. . . .

On the matter of abortion, too, Mr. McCracken seems confused about the role and opinions of population activists. He himself has reached the "agonized" conclusion that abortion should be a private and legal act, since all other alternatives "contribute to the traffic in illegal abortion and have the effect not so much of preventing abortions as of making them unsafe or expensive or both." A more fair summary of the views of most people *I* know —including both ZPG members and others—could not be made. And for most it was just as "agonized" a decision as it was for Mr. McCracken. . . .

Mr. McCracken thinks it too bad that a "citizen should be forced to pay for that which outrages him morally," and there should be such controversial taxation only for "the most compelling of general-welfare" considerations. Agreed! It happens that the war in Southeast Asia—all war —outrages me morally. But I pay for it. More to the present point, it outrages me morally to pay for someone else's eight kids, which I do even if the parents are financially solvent, because I pay taxes for schools, for police protection for them, and for other public services which they use. It outrages me morally to pay for people to have children whom they will mistreat, but who will nevertheless continue to have children, because it is their "right"—and also because it is a social imperative. It outrages me morally to realize that even if *I*, like Mr. McCracken, bear only two children, they will grow up in a world with only half the wide-open spaces and half the privacy that my world has. It outrages me morally to know that if I got pregnant, I *could* have the baby for *free*, stay home, and raise it for *free* (free for me, but obviously not for you), as many acquaintances of mine have done and are doing. But, if I choose *not* to be a mother, I must, in most parts of this country, pay for my own contraceptives—or for my own abortion. . . .

The definition of the boundary between individual freedom and infringement on the rights of others is continually changing; it is not absolute. And as I have suggested in this letter, family size and population size are not purely matters of individual freedom—the rights of others are involved in each personal decision.

JILLIAN STANLEY
Seattle, Washington

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

. . . Samuel McCracken is led to formulate the issue of population control as a "simple choice" between a voluntary program of population control and a compulsory program in which even execution is permissible. He doesn't entertain the possibility of an in-between position. Why does Mr. McCracken think that compulsory methods short of execution must fail? He never addresses himself to this question, but is content to point out that some population controllers are not capable of making a distinction between abortion and infanticide nor between contraception and sterilization. . . . Mr. McCracken never makes clear why he objects to each and every step government might take to control population: whether it is because of intrinsic defects or because he holds to a "snowball" theory according to which we are so unintelligent that

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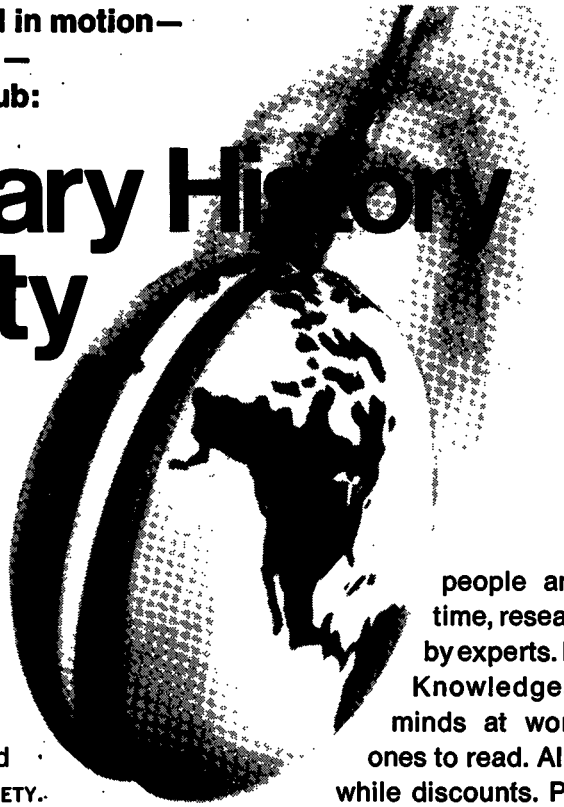

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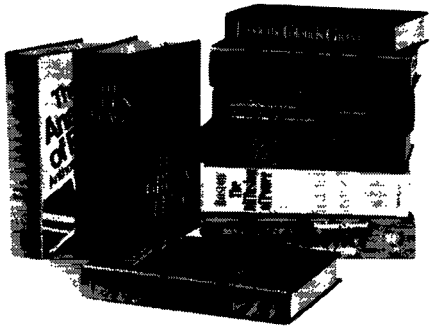

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once we get started on population control we will never know where to let off. . . .

In the first section of his article, Mr. McCracken denies that there is an overpopulation problem. He pokes fun at James Simon Kunen's claim that "the very air in the United States stinks, our rivers are fouled with poison, we are buried in garbage. . . ." He calls this reaction "hysterical." As proof that it is hysterical, Mr. McCracken mentions the names of a few places where the air is quite clean. Is this an argument? Is it a matter of showing that for every place one person can cite as polluted someone else can cite another as clean? Kunen's passage is a literary device intended to call attention to a growing problem. The falsity of his claim is not the falsity of deceit but of exaggeration, and to cite it as hysterical is to react hysterically to it.

Mr. McCracken completely ignores the fact that overpopulation is not a matter of absolute numbers. It is a matter of the population's being disproportionate to its resources. What may be overpopulation at one moment of time may not be at another. Nor is overpopulation the same thing as crowding. Mr. McCracken says that people have made the mistake of equating the two, but it is he who makes the mistake since, to prove that the United States is not overpopulated, he mentions that one can go for long bicycle rides in Portland and get that "19th-century feeling." But with the exception of Vatican City, and possibly a few other countries, one can do the same anywhere. Does that show that almost no country is overpopulated? . . .

Most of those who insist on the importance of ZPG realize that it is not a panacea for the problems of overpopulation. But until such time as we learn to preserve our natural resources and/or make related technological breakthroughs enabling us to make do with less of those resources, ZPG is a necessary holding action. For what could be a breakthrough in a world with three billion persons might only be a finger-in-the-dam expediency in a world with ten billion persons. Mr. McCracken is right in saying that we are not going to emigrate to other stars. Hence the technology of the United States does not make it immune to the problems faced by India. It is one world, and the people in it may drift to a common doom if they fail to see they have a problem in common.

SIDNEY GENDIN
Ypsilanti, Michigan

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

. . . Since I am a member of Zero Population Growth, Inc., am active in the local chapter, and have done a good deal of reading on population problems, I can speak with some assurance on the subject of population control. ZPG as an organization stresses *voluntary* limitation of births, and we believe that education, not regulation, is the way to convince people that limiting their families to two natural-born children is the most responsible thing they can do to insure a decent future for their children. If we do not achieve ZPG voluntarily, it is certain that at some future time, probably not too distant, the government will have to enforce population control with laws to prevent the collapse of civilization through overpopulation. It is this gruesome prospect that we are working to prevent.

The finite earth cannot support infinite people. The sooner people realize this, the less regulation will be necessary.

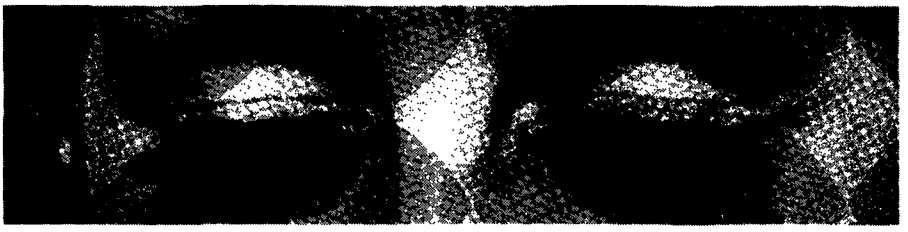
ALICE LEE
North Aurora, Illinois

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

. . . Zero Population Growth, Inc. doesn't aim to control, it aims to educate people about population and sex and birth control, to enable people to control their fertility, and to make childbearing one choice for women. We want to achieve population stabilization, but only by voluntary means. . . .

I'm glad that Mr. McCracken thinks population must be stabilized and that he has two children; that he supports freely available contraceptives and population and sex education; and that he believes abortion should be a decision between a woman and her doctor. So far he is with us. The divergence lies in his fear of a few radical members of ZPG . . . but they do not run or guide the organization, although they are accepted because we are not a totalitarian group. . . .

MIRIAM WOLF
Ann Arbor Chapter ZPG, Inc.
Ann Arbor, Michigan



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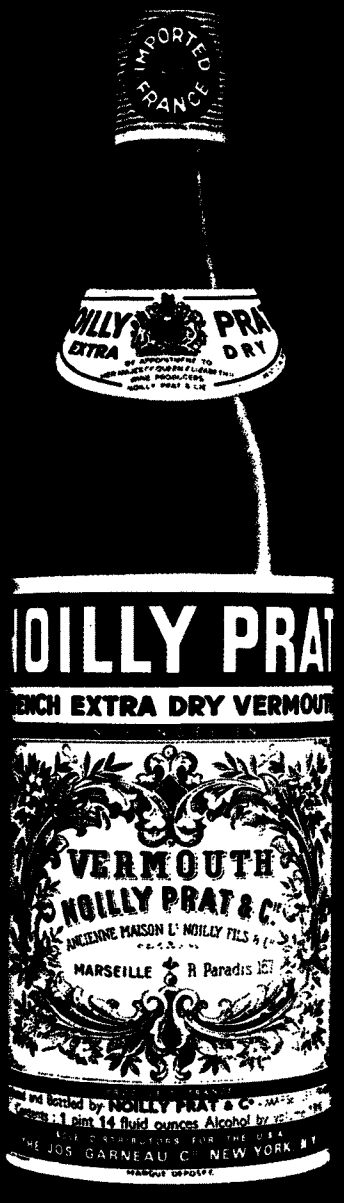

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TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

How naive can a couple of smart guys like Samuel McCracken and Norman Podhoretz be? In attacking the advocates of population control, they act as though we have a choice between coercion (which they abhor) and no coercion (which they much prefer, bless their sensitive souls). Don't they realize that there is no such choice? That the only choice we have is between a little voluntary and intelligent coercion now and the involuntary and brutal coercions that will inevitably be imposed on us all if we do not bring the human population under control immediately?

The child in us always resents any regulation of his behavior. The reasonable and responsible man knows that we must have restrictions on our behavior to protect our limited freedoms from the tyranny of anarchy. Individual freedom can only exist in a society of laws, and laws are necessarily restrictive and coercive.

The advocates of population control are trying to preserve our personal freedom, even though this means imposing new restrictions on our personal freedom. It is paradoxical, of course, but 'twas ever thus. . . .

C. H. LUTHER
Minneapolis, Minnesota

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

. . . While Samuel McCracken admits that "poor countries—like Bangladesh—areas which cannot feed their populations are by definition overpopulated," he dismisses as "extravagant hysteria" the suggestion that the United States, too, is overpopulated. . . . The old comparison is trotted out again, between the high density of the Netherlands and the acceptable, even agreeable, density of Manhattan. . . .But let us not forget that the Netherlands government has for at least two decades encouraged Netherlanders to emigrate. And let us not forget, too, that the people of the Netherlands live, survive, and work by virtue of their almost total dependence on imports of foodstuffs and raw resources from foreign soils, mines, farmlands. In this respect, the Netherlands is not different from Japan and from the megalopolis of New York City.

It is of bittersweet interest to note that Mr. McCracken's own sparsely populated and environmentally clean state of Oregon enjoys these qualities by courtesy of the following slogan which greets visitors and would-be immigrants: "Oregon for Oregonians! You're welcome to visit us, but don't move here." . . . A random collection of New York *Times* articles demonstrates that more and more areas (Florida, San Francisco, Long Island, New York, some Colorado towns, and now the state of Massachusetts) are presently scrutinizing the effects of their population growth and seeking to set limits on further population increases. . . .

As many readers know, however, overpopulation is not just a matter of crowding, density, and lack of adequate food resources within national boundaries. Many concerned scientists feel the U.S. is overpopulated, because it . . . makes extraordinary demands upon the biosphere's basic, nonrenewable resources. Thus, to satisfy American appetites, high standards of living, and industrial needs, U.S. dollars can in fact afford to buy from South American countries fish to be processed into fertilizers to fatten our cattle and poultry, soja-cakes from India, as well as minerals and metals from so-called "underdeveloped" (read hungry) nations who cannot afford to keep their products for their own growing populations. The time may come, however, when such poor countries, with justifiably rising expectations, may have to interrupt their exports of basic materials to the great consumers who presently depend on them. Thus, a consideration of our huge impact upon the resources of other nations may leave open to question the . . . comfortably self-righteous feeling that the United States does not have a population problem. . . .

REGINA BARSHAK
Brookline, Massachusetts

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Many of the measures proposed by some population enthusiasts and described by Samuel McCracken are certainly coercive and unacceptable in a society which values freedom. But Mr. McCracken fails to suggest alternative measures beyond voluntary family planning.

The women's-liberation movement is attempting to change attitudes toward childbearing which may solve much of the problem without coercive measures. The traditional sex roles in society—

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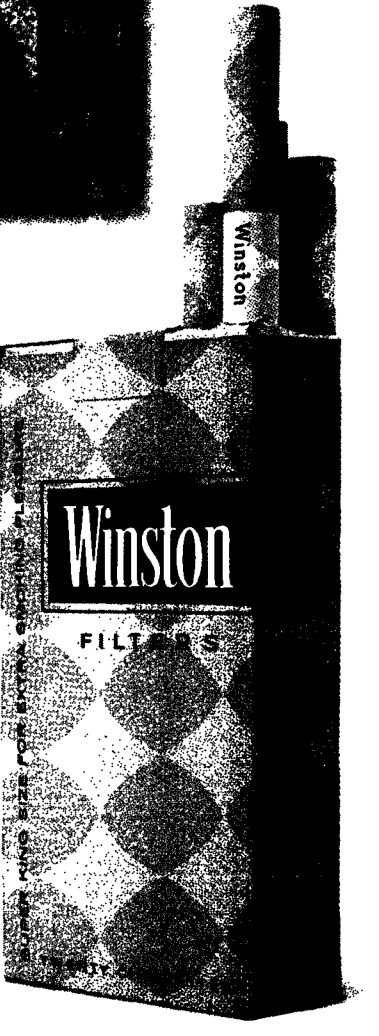

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THE HOLIDAYS

Harry Lieberman

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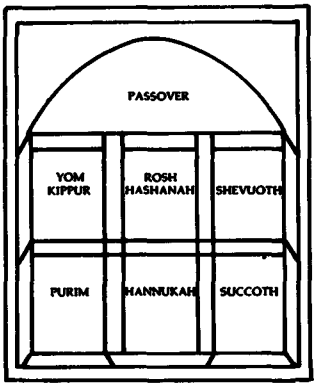

THE HOLIDAYS is typical of Harry Lieberman's joyous treatment of religious themes as he charmingly crowds a lifetime into a single picture, vibrant with color. Naive yet sophisticated, the overall effect can be likened to a Hasidic combination of biblical literalness and inspired symbolism. A faint nostalgia for the teachings of childhood and its lost innocence permeates the entire group despite its paradoxical appearance of stained glass panels in a wood frame.

Harry Lieberman's own life is as fascinating as his paintings, which win high critical praise wherever they are shown. Although he started his painting career late (at the age of 78) and as a primitive, there is nothing amateurish about his work. In fact, the richness of the color and detail in his interpretations of Biblical themes imbue them with great vitality and warmth.

Born in a typical *shtetl*, Gnieveshev, pop. 500, near Warsaw, nephew of the village Rabbi, Harry Lieberman followed the Hasidic Sect of Mystic Ecstasy founded by the Baal-Shem-Tov. He came to this country in 1906 and worked at first as a clothing cutter on the lower East Side of New York. The confectionary business beckoned next, and the one he and his wife started grew and prospered until he retired to Great Neck, New York, in 1950. There his primary interest was chess but, when his chess partner fell ill—Harry Lieberman turned to painting.

Now in his nineties, he is still exhibiting his work in both one-man and group exhibitions; and it is collected both here and abroad by museums, individuals, and institutions.

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men determined to "prove their virility" by fathering many children, and the idea that motherhood is the only "true fulfillment" and career for women—are being challenged. . . .

There are many visible obstacles in the paths of women aspiring to careers. Discrimination in admission to graduate and professional schools and in the awarding of fellowships, discrimination in hiring and promotion, salary differentials, lack of maternity leave, discriminatory social-security and tax laws are all well-documented and must be changed to make equal-employment opportunity a reality. When these have been changed, career-oriented women will no longer be discouraged. However, there are also many invisible barriers. . . .

When the psychological barriers, as well as the educational and vocational ones, are removed from female achievement, when "woman's place" is no longer considered at home, and when women are encouraged to seek careers equally with men, children will cease to be their only mode of fulfillment, and their desired family size will be reduced. It has already been demonstrated that women whose self-image is more active and independent and less stereotypically "feminine" tend to have smaller families than women who have incorporated the stereotype more completely into their self-image. . . .

When given a truly free choice, many women will choose to have smaller families. Such a solution involves an increase in individual freedoms rather than an infringement on them.

JUDITH S. WEIS
Rutgers University
Newark, New Jersey

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

I am glad to see someone take a swipe at Paul Ehrlich and his fellow neo-Malthusians, but I think the criticism can be carried much further. Ehrlich and other ecologists who attribute all or most of the problems of the world to overpopulation are not merely elitist but wrong—in the sense that their claims, despite superficial plausibility, can bear little scholarly scrutiny. Their simplistic theories in fact obscure real understanding of complicated economic and political problems, and hinder intelligent solutions.

Let me put forward the following propositions for which the economic literature on "underdeveloped" countries offers ample documentation.

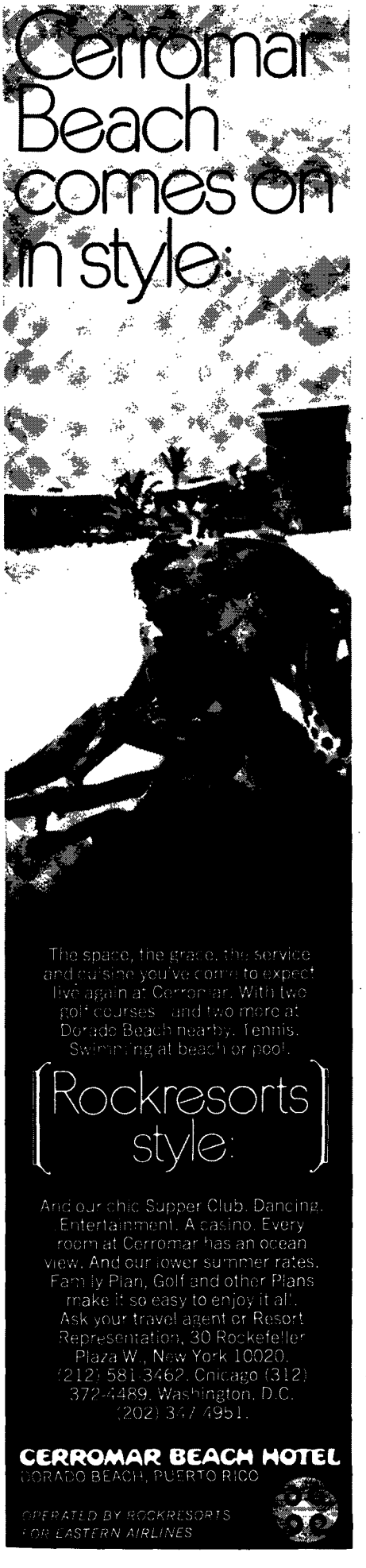
The misery and overcrowding widely visible in the "underdeveloped" countries (and to a lesser extent in the slums of the "developed" countries) result not from too many people for too few resources but from extreme inequalities of wealth and opportunity, maintained by unjust political systems.

Even countries like India and China, with very large populations, have vast unexploited resources, while the resources of the Americas have barely been touched. Obviously resources have limits, but no convincing evidence shows those limits have been approached. . . . On the contrary, the same unjust political systems which create the illusion of overpopulation by condemning a large part of the people to severe privation simultaneously hamper or prevent economic development. In particular, the agricultural systems typical of underdeveloped countries permit a relatively small number of landlords and moneylenders to impose exorbitant rents and interest charges on the peasant majority who own little or no land. The law supports the system, often—as in Latin America, Pakistan, or Southeast Asia—by force of arms. . . .

Many "underdeveloped" countries do have a genuine population problem in the sense of too rapid population growth—although some demographers consider the harm exaggerated. Increased health and freedom for the parents also make birth control desirable, and of course the world must reach ZPG eventually.

But population problems, to the extent they exist, cannot be solved without prior political reform. The rulers of underdeveloped countries frequently regard themselves as benefiting from "excess" population which insures them a cheap, half-starved labor supply; at least they will not often give population control high priority. But if they do, population control inevitably assumes the unsavory aspect of an effort to keep discontent within bounds by suppressing undesirables at the bottom of the income scale. Hence the fury which talk of population control inspires in Third-World radicals.

People spontaneously limit their children as soon as they reach a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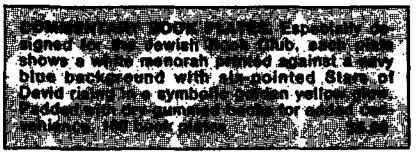
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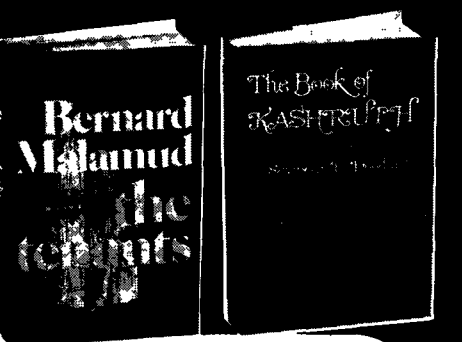

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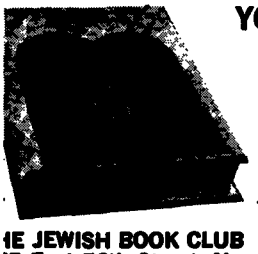

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certain moderate standard of living. On the other hand, as the population alarmists recognize, only brutal coercion can reduce birth rates among desperately poor people. Whether reductions due to increased prosperity will produce ZPG is unknown but not improbable. For example, the U.S. birth rate recently dipped near the ZPG rate despite the fact that access to means of birth control remains limited and low-income persons continue to have large numbers of children. Voluntary birth control due to improved living standards at least deserves a chance. In any case, the Chinese did not adopt their stringent birth-control measures until after the revolution had equalized opportunity and given the population a spartan but tolerable living standard—and then not on the theory that China is overpopulated but that rapid population increase obstructed orderly economic development and the provision of education and health care.

Population hysteria has a long history in this country, from the Social Darwinists of the last century to naturalist William Vogt with his sensational *Road to Survival* in 1948, a work which Ehrlich's *Population Bomb* essentially rehashes. But the realities of today's world make the population gospel . . . particularly unfortunate. As long as we point an accusing finger at overpopulation (the fault, after all, of those poor wretches who don't know any better), we avoid facing some rather nasty questions about the kind of regimes we support in Brazil, Pakistan, or South Vietnam—or the nature of our interest in these benighted countries. Can it be a coincidence that the most prominent and long-standing advocates of world population control have been people like John D. Rockefeller III whose foreign investments have given them a strong stake in the political stability of underdeveloped countries? Surely they, like Ehrlich and friends, have the best of intentions; but equally surely they see the problems of these countries through the eyes of their friends and business contacts among the local ruling elites.

To abandon the population red herring means to recognize that Mao and Castro, whatever their democratic failings, had good reason to throw out the corrupt and exploitive regimes of Chiang and Batista. It means to recognize that the North Vietnamese and Vietcong offer the peasantry more than just the exchange of one remote oppressive landlord for another. Finally, it means to recognize the more than superficial similarity of our stifling ghettos to the reeking *favelas* of Brazil and the human sewers of Calcutta.

POLLY ROBERTS
Research Director,
California Action Incorporated
San Francisco, California

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

I am so glad that Samuel McCracken has routed the population sloganeers, albeit he was unable to resist creating one himself.

ZPG slogans like "Smaller Families or Bigger Headaches?" and "Make Love Not Babies" are grizzly enough, but the one that concerns me most is "Stop at Two." What if *our* parents had "stopped at two"? A little research only confirms my suspicions. We would still have had Richard and Pat Nixon and Lyndon Johnson, Hubert Humphrey, and Spiro Agnew. We'd have had Ronald Reagan and Nelson Rockefeller, John and Martha Mitchell, William Rogers, Henry Kissinger, George Shultz, and Strom Thurmond, just to scrape the surface. . . . Has anyone ever noticed how political life crawls with only or elder children? Much as I hate slogans, this almost seems to warrant a new one: "Start at Three."

Maybe this is why Shirley Temple, a number three, never made it to Congress. On the other hand, Bernadette Devlin, also a third child, did make it to the House of Commons. But women need not worry. Betty Friedan and Kate Millett would still be around. So, indeed, would Hugh Hefner. Phyllis Diller would still be with us, though not Twiggy; Billy Graham, though we would never have known Pope John XXIII; George Plimpton, though not Joe Namath. The Smothers Brothers would have been born, but not the Berrigans; Chico and Harpo, but not Groucho; Gore Vidal but not William Buckley—or James, for that matter; Elizabeth Taylor, but not Richard Burton. . . .

But think of all the enjoyment our children and their world would miss out on if we left it to those first two kids. Incidentally, I may be biased. If *my* parents had "stopped at two," instead of soldiering on to seven, I wouldn't be around to write this letter.

HENRY PELHAM BURN
New York City

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

I take issue with Norman Podhoretz in "Beyond ZPG." Mr. Podhoretz is guilty of confusing two entirely separate issues: zero population growth and euthanasia. He asserts that the majority of the proponents of ZPG favor or might favor euthanasia as a justifiable means of population control, but I'm afraid he is wrong. I have long been associated with groups whose goal is achieving population stability, and I can state unequivocally that euthanasia has absolutely no bearing on the issue of population control, for the simple reason that population growth would not be significantly affected one way or another by the deaths of a few individuals under euthanasia.

Now, I think that Mr. Podhoretz will find, if he talks to the supporters of ZPG, that they, too, condemn euthanasia as morally wrong. But they will object, as I have, to his mixing the issues of population control and euthanasia.

MICHAEL D. FLYTE
Medford, Oregon

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

I work for population stabilization, but I do not favor infanticide, nor do I believe in any "eugenic dream." As a professional nurse, I feel that the general public does not have the information necessary to practice birth control effectively. I believe that everyone should have the right to limit the size of his family, if he wishes to. But many, if not most, do not have the birth-control know-how to do this. . . .

(Mrs.) J. EMMONS
Hibbing, Minnesota

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

While reading Norman Podhoretz's "Beyond ZPG" it occurred to me that in our eagerness for "progress" in the form of abortion and infanticide we are almost to the point of agreeing with the ancient Spartans' policy of destroying any defective infant. The Spartans were possibly whole in body, but they were distinctly lacking in intelligence or sensitivity. Are we progressing to a similar state?

(Mrs.) J. C. VAN SELUS
Minneapolis, Minnesota

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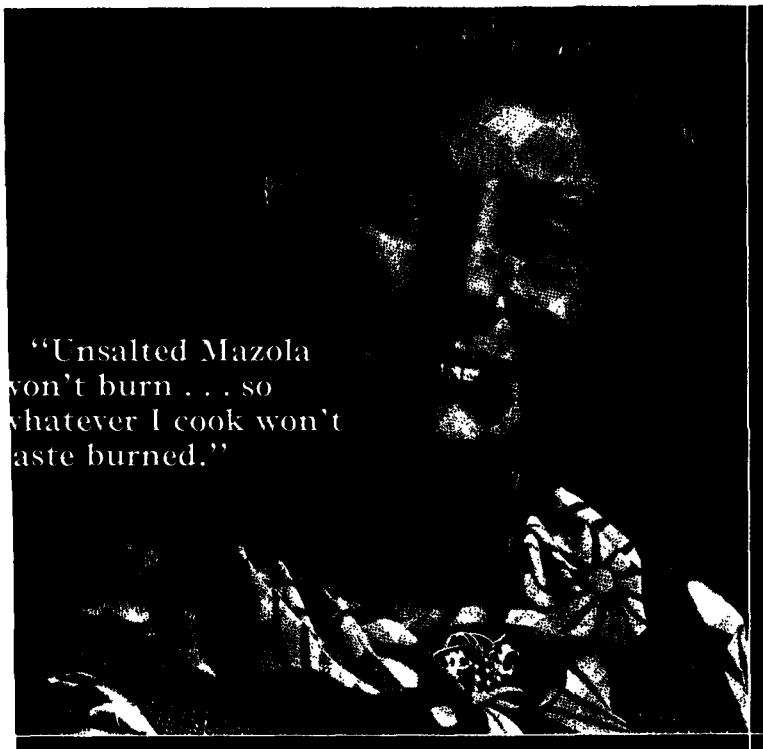

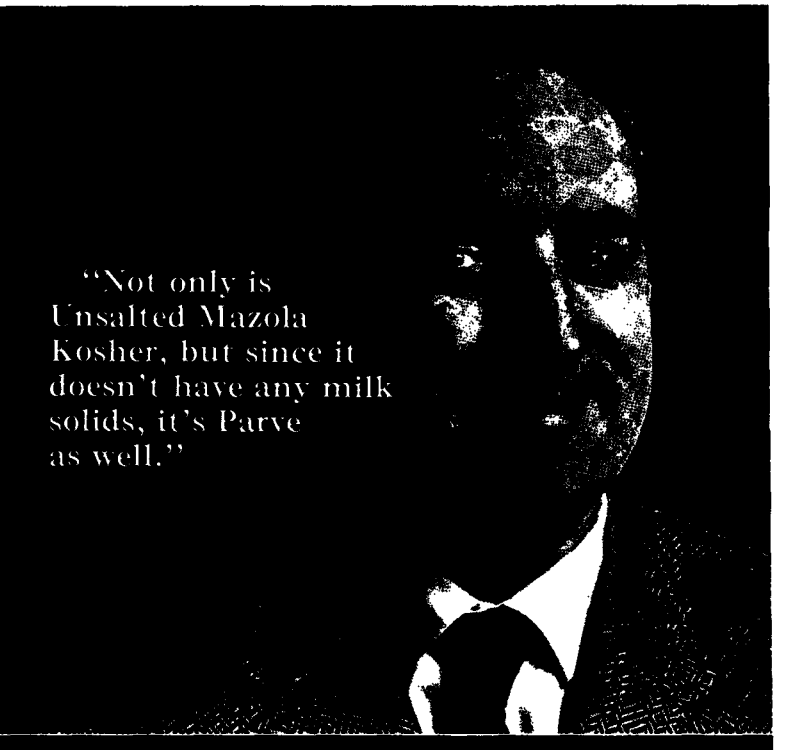

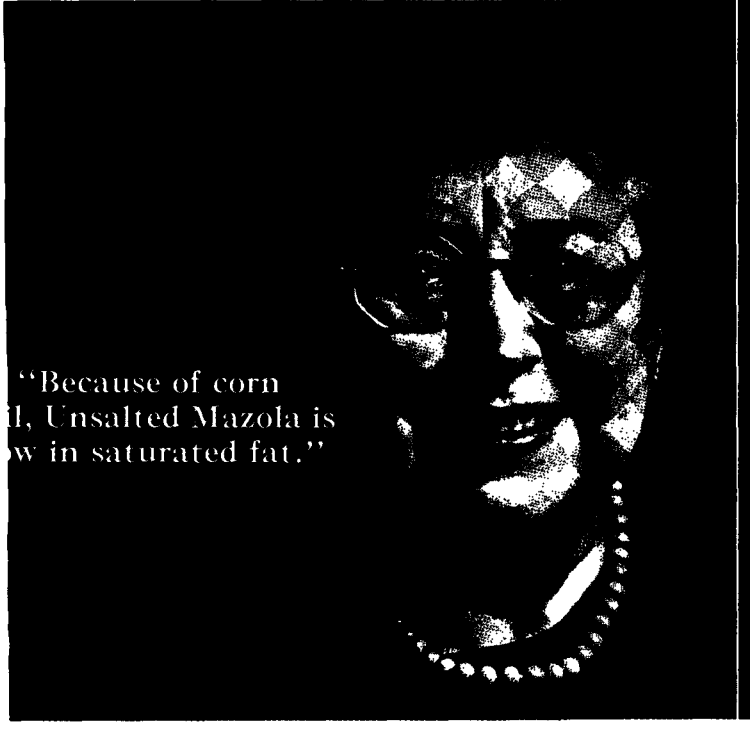

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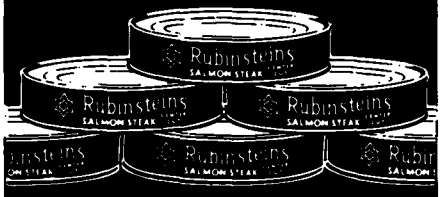

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SAMUEL MCCRACKEN writes:

It is of course reassuring to have support from George Grier and William Petersen: as a non-demographer, I am diffident about entering lists for which I have had no formal training, and would be happy to leave the questions of fact in the hands of those who have, if only Ehrlich and the rest would do the same. But I am not the first dilettante to enter the population debate, and amateurs who advocate population control must expect to be read and criticized both by professionals and by other amateurs. (To Mr. Petersen's belief that I take my objects too seriously I can only say that while I should expect an Ehrlich or a Willing to be laughed out of the professional journals, if not downright ignored, they *are* being taken seriously elsewhere, and I see nothing for it but to point out why they should not be.)

I am less surprised than Mr. Grier at the ferocity of the reaction to his research: the population-control establishment is as near as a group of intellectuals ever comes to seeing its discipline substantially embodied in the statute book, and it is not unexpected that it should wince at evidence suggesting that it may have had no more than a Pisgah-sight of power. Even for non-social scientists, population control is the ideal cause; it requires no constructive action other than the usual agit-prop (Mrs. Willing, who is the mother of four, is able to have her cake and ration it for others) and the principal dogma is that everyone ought to behave more or less like the middle class. No wonder, then, the fashionableness of the cause, no wonder, too, that its supporters are especially outraged by the existence of inconvenient heretics.

A number of my correspondents think I have been unfair to Zero Population Growth, Incorporated. If they will take the trouble to read my article, they will see that I mentioned their organization but once, and in a neutral context. I have, as a matter of fact, resisted the temptation to use the initials ZPG as an easy code-name for the population-control movement. However much its members may regret the missed publicity, "The Population Controllers" is not about ZPG, Inc. What it is about is the views of certain authors discussed in the text. Does anyone disagree with Mrs. Willing or Dr. Chasteen? Very well, then: I do not include such a person in my strictures on these two figures. Discourse on social policy would be marvelously improved if people could get out of this nasty habit of thinking of themselves as members of political parties.

But I make no apology for dealing with Mrs. Willing and Dr. Chasteen. They exist, they publish, they form an unpleasant bit of the intellectual climate. They most certainly exhibit the excesses deriving from the axioms of population control which people are being led into, and as such they are important: mass movements have a knack of ending up in the control of their most extreme members. And if Ehrlich seems a less totalitarian figure than they, that is because he is politically a good deal more naive. Since he is willing to suppress the freedom of the press and of speech, and endorses the current draft of Rexford G. Tugwell's authoritarian proposals for a new constitution, I conclude that either he doesn't think much about freedom, or that he has thought about it and found it unimportant. Had I limited myself to the published work of Ehrlich, I would have been no less disturbed by the movement: when an Ehrlich comes, the Willings and Chasteens will not be far behind.

It seems that William A. Peck's odd notion is that they who comment upon a movement must limit themselves to figures least open to criticism: no sportsmanlike critic, so it appears, finding in his sights so plump and gently quivering a pigeon as Mrs. Willing, would open fire. She is not, after all, like Mr. Peck, an Officially-Certified Spokesperson. One can imagine this to be a critical theory Dr. Norman Vincent Peale would endorse, but few others outside the target area would be likely to subscribe to it.

Certified Ehrlich may be, but he does not answer my arguments in *The Population Bomb*, or anywhere else, unless one is to assume that Sacred Writ is always the answer to the impious arguments of the infidel Higher Critics. (I will refrain from pointing out that he has not answered them in the most convenient of forums, i.e., these very columns.) Perhaps Mr. Peck's suggestion that I have not read *The Population Bomb* is a feeble —almost pathetic—attempt at irony. As it happens, an earlier draft of my piece had a great deal more

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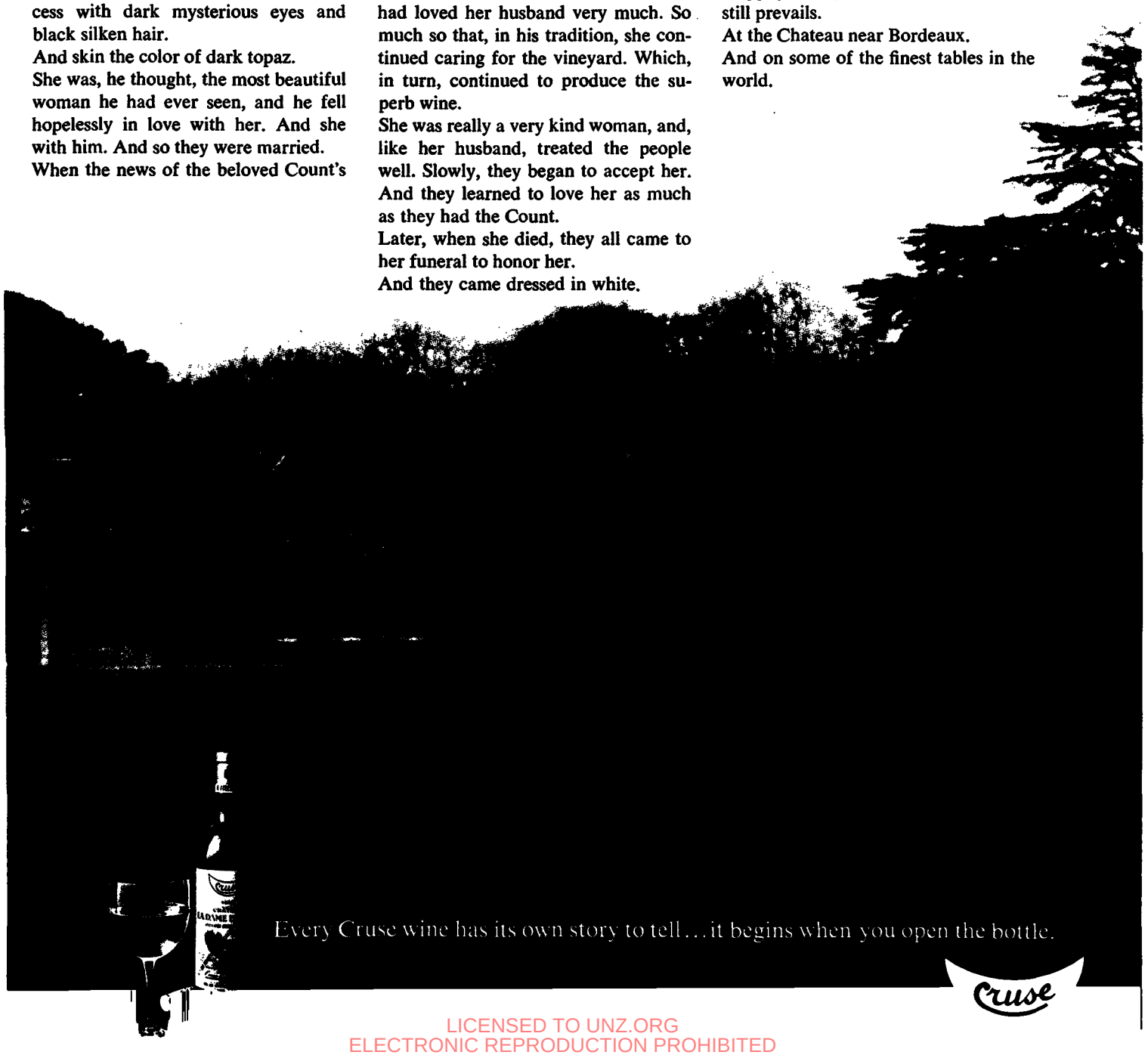

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to say about this book, all of it, Mr. Peck may be shocked to learn, pointedly unfavorable. Ehrlich is, if anything, scarier than might appear from my article. He believes (says, at least) that high population density leads to authoritarian government; this explains, doubtless, why the United States is more densely populated than the Soviet Union, Denmark than China, the member states of NATO than those of the Warsaw Pact.

The single example given by Mr. Peck of how Ehrlich "answers" me is a paradigm of the guru's gift for terrible simplification and the disciple's acceptance of the result as beyond examination. Ehrlich, like many another, does indeed point out that Americans consume more than other people. But what is the point of the statistic? The implied comment is that they consume more than their share. What is their share? Not, it would seem, as much as they can pay for: if their share is simply per capita, obviously they consume much more than they should. They have, for example, too many universities, and within them, too many biologists. Shall Stanford be the first to be shipped off to the undeveloped world, Ehrlich the first to declare himself redundant and take the veil? The moral dimension in the question is great, but surely one who believes that the resources of the earth belong to its people in equal and entailed shares has only one responsible course: to calculate his share and eschew the surplus. Of such a calculation, or of any recognition of such complexities as the contribution a society makes to the world, Ehrlich & Company are quite innocent.

Mr. Peck notwithstanding, nowhere do I assert that the fertility rate is slowly reaching 2.1. What I do is cite Mr. Grier's evidence that it may have already gotten there, in fact that it may be heading still downward. I also suggest that such evidence must be weighed along with other evidence to the contrary. Mr. Peck, it seems, although he claims to have read my essay, seems not even to have noticed such evidence, let alone considered its value. I presume his figure of 310 million Americans by 2000 derives from Projection C of the Bureau of the Census, now widely under challenge as unrealistically high, as it extrapolates the fertility rate of 1966, below which we have now dropped. Projection D, in closer accord with the present rate, would yield about 275 million by the end of the century. Mr. Peck's easy reliance on the figures he chooses is a neat example of the fallacy of regarding extrapolation as the history of the future, an error about which Mr. Grier is extremely informative. I recommend his pamphlet to Mr. Peck. Mr. Peck's final remark really does leave me wondering whether he has read my article in which I pointed out that anyone who argues that increasing our population by half again will lead to horrors unimagined must face the inconvenient evidence of such countries as Denmark and the Netherlands, where the density is already between *five* and *fifteen* times that of the United States. Unless Mr. Peck's researches into rats have vouchsafed him (as-yet-unreported) evidence that the American central nervous system resembles the rodentine more than the Dutch or Danish, his evocation of these horrors remains so much hysterical blather. Why cannot he (and others) *look around them* as a first step in testing their theories? Not that medieval theologians ever really did debate the number of angels that can dance on the head of a pin, but if they had, they would have been downright empirical compared with Mr. Peck: whatever their knowledge of angel size, one would presume they knew something about pins. Wearily—very wearily—I acknowledge that Mr. Peck probably runneth over with good intentions, none of which has the slightest bearing upon his understanding of the world around him, or his plans for its future.

To judge from Jillian Stanley's letter, she too has not read much of my article. I cite some dozen sources besides Willing and Ehrlich, and yes, Miss Stanley, I have read rather more than I have cited. I would not leave the problem to the experts, i.e., let them decide upon policy. But I am interested in their views on the facts of the situation, which is presumably the only reason for there being any experts to begin with. The making of social policy I quaintly believe to be the province of the people and their elected deputies.

It would be reassuring to believe that all those who conclude that abortion ought to be a private issue have done so after an agony of decision; I cannot believe that this has been the case for those who glibly proclaim that a woman should do with her body as she pleases, leaving the moral complexity at that. Nor do I find Miss Stanley's catalogue of outrages very convincing. Like her, I find the Vietnam war immoral, and am likewise outraged by having to pay for it. But I am not outraged by having to pay for schools, regarding such institutions as not *au fond* immoral. Nor, unlike Miss Stanley, do I believe that the simple existence of any eight humans is immoral; her ethics here seem to derive from Poujade or Vivian Kellems rather than from any other of the moral philosophers. Presumably, Miss Stanley and I agree that the war ought to be terminated forthwith: does she feel the same way about those children? Her confusion of irritation and moral outrage is hardly unique in our time, but it suggests that a little moral outrage will go a long way. Her statement that personal freedom is always relative is disturbing because of the absence of so much as a whisper of the doctrine that some rights, say that to life, may be inalienable, not to be abrogated because some comfortable person finds the property-tax burden getting worse. The more such people protest their disapproval of the Willings, the more one wonders.

Let me assist Sidney Gendin in his comprehension of the coercion problem: each level of Malthusian repression short of compulsory sterilization will succeed in coercing a certain proportion of the people not coerced by the previous level; inevitably, though, it will fail to coerce others, presumably a declining proportion, as the coercion escalates. Unless the state is willing to allow those who stick it out to get away with more than two children, a policy bound to encourage more defiance once it gets known, it will have to proceed, in the awful words of the torture warrant, *per gradus per ima*. While I find executing the polyparous more noxious than merely taxing them, both actions, indeed all steps in the process, involve the recognition that the state can control reproduction. Until someone can convince me that it ought to, I shall find each step, in Mr. Gendin's word, defective.

The trouble with James Kunen's claim about America is that it is false. Indeed, a claim that *everything* is *X* cannot stand in the face that *something* is *not X*. The more

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things *not X*, the greater the falsity of the claim. I did not attempt an exhaustive catalogue of the locales in this country which do not agree with Mr. Kunen's description, but if Mr. Gendin will send me a list of U.S. cities and towns, along with a stamped, self-addressed envelope, I will tick off a few thousand. To his ridiculous sophistry in making a distinction between the deceit of falsity and the deceit of exaggeration, it is impossible to have any response save contempt. Hitler, I suppose, did no more than to exaggerate the need for *Lebensraum*. (Kunen, it should be said in passing, is an author in whom there is much to admire, and that one usually so clear-sighted can talk this way is a sign of the times.)

My bicycling activities, at any rate, I did not cite as proof that the country is not overpopulated, but rather that it is not as filthy as Kunen appears to believe. Mr. Gendin is probably correct in saying that one can bicycle in any country save Vatican City. My literary conscience being less barefoot than Mr. Gendin would like it to be, it led me to describe the territory where I do in fact cycle; I could have named some thousands of others with no more than artistic license.

While it is reassuring to hear from Alice Lee and Miriam Wolf that ZPG is a hotbed of voluntarism, it should be noted that the former says that the organization *stresses* voluntary control. Such a position is worlds away from a *rejection* of compulsory control. Who would not *prefer* the former to the latter? A recent press release from the organization itself, reacting to the current film *ZPG* (which an even and informed judge tells me is the worst film ever made), says that it *emphasizes* voluntary programs. Again, what we do not hear is a renunciation of force.

C. H. Luther is a good deal more candid. I stand in goggling admiration (I can do no other) at his novel concept of *voluntary coercion*. Unless his metaphysics has outrun mine by a greater distance than I think likely, it must be voluntary for the coercers, coercive for the coerced. So what else is new? Yes, yes, we must have restrictions upon our behavior to protect our freedoms from the tyranny of anarchy. Does Mr. Luther think this a valid argument in favor of any and all coercions? If not, then he will concede that some coercions are unacceptable because they limit, rather than preserve, freedom. That we disagree on whether compulsory population control is one of these is owing to our disagreement on the nature of the population problem, as well as on the nature of what he suavely calls a little intelligent and voluntary coercion. I will match my naiveté against that of the author of such a phrase, any time.

Regina Barshak's letter is informed by the sort of comic-strip thinking typical of the movement. I can well understand why the very existence of the Netherlands is embarrassing to Mrs. Barshak and her mentors, because while they tell us that the United States is overpopulated at a density of 60/m^2, indeed cannot exist at 90/m^2, there sit the United Provinces, fat and sassy at 920/m^2. If practical-

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ly every social ill in this country is to be attributed to overcrowding, how do the Dutch, the Danes, the Italians, the Monegasques, and the rest manage to escape Armageddon? Mrs. Barshak gives the joke away herself: when a country gets to a density of 900/m², it *encourages* emigration! But she evades the question and changes the subject by coming up with the astounding news that the Netherlands imports raw material to turn into food. They who have learned this stunner normally put it that the country is not self-sufficient, but what they mean is that it is not autarkic. What country is? World trade is based precisely on the odd fact that each country has some deficiencies and some surpluses. All those foodstuffs flowing into the Netherlands are not, we must remember, sweated out of the starving peasantry of the Netherlands empire and escorted to Rotterdam by the battle cruisers of the Imperial Netherlands Navy. They are paid for. If Mrs. Barshak and Professor Ehrlich are opposed to world trade, they ought to say so, and why. She, apparently, knows better than all those underdeveloped and undereducated states what they should do with their soja-cakes, but whether she has another source for the foreign exchange they will lose when world trade is forbidden I cannot say, nor can I tell what she makes of the fact that India no longer imports rice.

I don't know whether to laugh or cry at her assertion that Oregon's ecological superiority is by courtesy of those signs the James G. Blaine Society erects at the frontier. I think she takes the society rather more seriously than we out here are wont to. Were we to follow her, some of us would be worried about the extent to which its goals come into conflict with the old-fashioned notion that anyone who can get past the U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service can domicile himself where he damn pleases without getting letters of denization. The Society's proper course would be to declare unilateral independence before setting up its customs posts. As a matter of intractable fact, Oregon is a rapidly growing state, having increased its population some 18 per cent between 1960 and 1970, if not as much as Florida or California, still twice as much as Mrs. Barshak's Massachusetts. I am thus glad to be assured by her that environmental nirvana is so compatible with rapid growth.

Judith S. Weis is of course entirely right in saying that the women's liberation movement is likely to lower the birthrate, may have already begun to do so. But that is a movement I should prefer to see dealt with on its own merits; unless we are willing to see the extinction of humanity, it seems that some women must bear children occasionally, but I think we must live with the consequences of our belief in human rights here as elsewhere. About the desirability of removing barriers to careers for women, I could not be in greater agreement, and will remain so even should the result be a severe depopulation.

Without agreeing with Polly Roberts at quite every turn, I believe that she has identified one more serious objection to the work of the population controllers, that they provide a neat cop-out for those who don't want to face up to a whole complex of social ills. Believing in original sin to a degree which might astonish them should they recognize it, they propose a solution to the human problem: fewer humans. I share Miss Roberts's anger at the extent to which comfortable people shelter from nasty realities in the reinforcing atmosphere of a media-puffed pseudo-crisis.

I confess myself not up to the statistical inquiry which would allow me to respond intelligently to Henry Pelham Burn. (I proposed "Stop at Two" less as a slogan than I presented it as my own practice to show my own disinterestedness. In the same spirit, I can point out that while stopping at two would have left me and my wife around, as well as my own parents, one would not have to get back very far to encounter an embarrassing but absolutely essential surplus ancestor.)

I am struck, at this last, by the fact that those writing in opposition have raised no single argument which I had not canvassed and rejected while forming my own opinions on the subject. This would not be so surprising had I not arraigned most of the arguments in the article in question. The suspicion dawns that too many readers read not what is before them, but what they expect to read, given their prejudices. Too bad, considering the areas of human behavior which are at stake.

NORMAN PODHORETZ writes:

In answer to Mr. Flyte and Mrs. Emmons, who see no connection between the movement to control the size of the population and what I called "the eugenic dream" of controlling the quality of the human "stock," let me point to Dr. Robert H. Williams, professor of medicine at the University of Washington: "Population experts are giving us vigorous warnings that steps must be instituted at an early date for restriction of the population increase . . . [which imposes] catastrophic problems with respect to food, clothing, space, social organization, and other factors. Therefore, *since we must restrict the rate of population increase,* we should also be giving careful consideration to the quality as well as to the quantity of people generated." (*Northwest Medicine,* July 1970, emphasis in original.)

In answer to Mr. Peck, who claims that only nobodies and crackpots share in the eugenic dream, I point to Dr. Phillip Handler, neither a nobody nor a crackpot but an eminent biochemist and the president of the National Academy of Sciences. According to the November 29, 1971 issue of *Modern Medicine,* Dr. Handler believes "that the future of the human species could be threatened if something is not done to prevent the continued deterioration of the human gene pool" and that "it may be necessary to adopt 'a new ethic' which places the survival of the species before the rights of the individual."

And of course there is also the "molecular biologist of the greatest renown" of whom I spoke in "Beyond ZPG"—the one who, I said, "believes that no newborn infant should be declared human until it has passed certain tests regarding its genetic endowment; if it fails these tests it forfeits the right to live." I did not mention this scientist's name because I was told about his views privately and I was not certain that he had ever made them known in public. Having now ascertained that he has (on a talk he delivered over BBC radio about two years ago, but which he has never allowed to be printed), I feel free to reveal his name. It is Sir Francis Crick, co-discoverer of the structure of DNA, Nobel Laureate, and universally regarded by those who know as one of the greatest scientific minds of the age.

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The Franklin Case (Cont'd)

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

I was truly surprised, and disappointed, to see Herbert L. Packer become so personal in his response to my letter [Letters from Readers, August] about his article, "Academic Freedom and the Franklin Case" [April]. The case obviously raises important and controversial issues about which reasonable men can and do disagree. But instead of responding to my arguments on their merits, Mr. Packer seeks to discredit me by implying that I became involved in the Franklin case not because of my longstanding commitment to civil liberties and academic freedom, but rather because I had a political or personal interest in Franklin's "cause." Mr. Packer does not come right out and say this because he knows it is demonstrably untrue, but he does imply it by his invocation of the following "facts": 1) "he [Dershowitz] had spent a couple of hours with Franklin"; 2) "only he [Dershowitz] and Franklin know what went on during that conference"; 3) "the two men [Joel Klein, who agreed to represent Franklin, and Dershowitz] are, I understand, close friends"; 4) "he [Dershowitz] had, before the presentation of the facts in the hearing, already committed himself to Franklin's cause. . . ."

The only way I know of to respond to this kind of argument-by-insinuation is to flush each of the intended inferences out into the open where they can be candidly confronted and answered.

As I made clear in my original letter, Franklin had asked me to serve as his attorney; the purpose of our meeting was to discuss that and the possibility of securing other counsel. Mr. Packer knows that I am professionally bound to keep the specific content of our discussion confidential, since a conference between a lawyer and one who is seeking to retain him professionally is as privileged as a conference between a lawyer and one who is already his client. Mr. Packer's snide comment that "[o]nly he and Franklin know what went on during that conference" smacks of primitive McCarthyism. Knowing that I am not at liberty to disclose what went on, he implies that it was something that I would be embarrassed to have revealed. I can assure the readers that this is not so. Indeed, I would be pleased to have the contents of our meeting disclosed by Franklin (who, under the Canons of Ethics, is the only person authorized to make such disclosure).

Mr. Packer's invocation of my friendship with Joel Klein contains a double implication: 1) that Klein is "committed" to Franklin's "cause," since he agreed to represent him, and 2) that I must also be committed, since Klein and I are, as Mr. Packer understands it, "close friends." Both implications are unfounded. Klein agreed to assist Franklin professionally only after it became clear that no one else in the Stanford community would do so. He is not, as I understand it, committed to or sympathetic with Franklin's political views. Moreover, Klein and I disagree about a great many political and legal issues. Friendship—at least the kind I have—does not presuppose uniformity of opinions on all issues. Indeed, the legal position advocated by Klein, as counsel for Franklin, differed in fundamental respects from the legal position that I advocated as counsel for the ACLU. For example, Klein argued that his client was entitled to prevent Henry Cabot Lodge from speaking if Lodge was indeed a "war criminal." The ACLU brief, on the other hand, "vigorously [disputed the claim] that there is a 'right' to silence a speaker who is accused of being a 'war criminal.'" Accordingly, it took the position that if Franklin "intentionally engaged in concerted activity designed to silence Ambassador Lodge," then "discipline would be appropriate." (The Board found in favor of Franklin on the "Lodge incident.") There were a number of other important respects in which the ACLU brief departed from Franklin's positions. Needless to say, neither Klein nor Franklin was pleased with the ACLU's positions on these issues.

Mr. Packer's statement that I was "already committed . . . to Franklin's cause" even before the facts were presented is apparently intended to convey the impression that my commitment was of a political or personal nature, or—at the very least—that I am the kind of knee-jerk liberal who automatically sides with radicals regardless of the facts. There are two things wrong with this argument. First, the factual allegation is false: I became interested in the merits of the case only after I heard the tapes and the accounts of the speeches that formed the basis of the charges against Franklin. Indeed, I did not communicate my concerns to the ACLU until well after the close of the university's factual case. Second—and far more important—I am not and have never been "committed" to Franklin's "cause." What I said in my original letter obviously bears repetition in light of Mr. Packer's continuing innuendos:

> Bruce Franklin's political views are despicable to me. I firmly believe that he is a dangerous person. I sincerely hope that he fails in his goals, and I will do everything I can—consistent with the Constitution—to see that his ideas are rejected in the free market-place of ideas.

Mr. Packer also seeks to convey the impression that I acted improperly in filing an *amicus* brief on behalf of the ACLU since I did not "represent disinterested opinion." Mr. Packer's discussion of this issue is totally misleading, the more so since it appears in a publication whose readership consists primarily of non-lawyers who cannot be expected to recognize the distortion. He suggests—though again he does not say it directly—that it is improper for an attorney to submit a brief *amicus curiae* unless he "represent[s] a disinterested opinion." It is easy to understand how a layman might be misled by the words *amicus curiae* (literally, "friend of the court") to believe that disinterestedness or neutrality is required of one who files such a brief. But as any experienced attorney or law teacher well knows, there is no such requirement, either in law or in practice. On the contrary, virtually all briefs *amicus curiae* are filed by persons or organizations with concrete interests in the outcome of the litigation. These interests are sometimes financial, sometimes political, and sometimes of a civil-rights nature. As one writer has summarized the current situation: "*Amicus curiae* briefs are expected to represent a specific rather than a diffuse interest." Indeed, the rules of the United States Supreme Court *require* that an applicant to file a brief *amicus curiae* state an "interest" in the case. The ACLU explicitly stated its interest in the first paragraph of its brief as follows:

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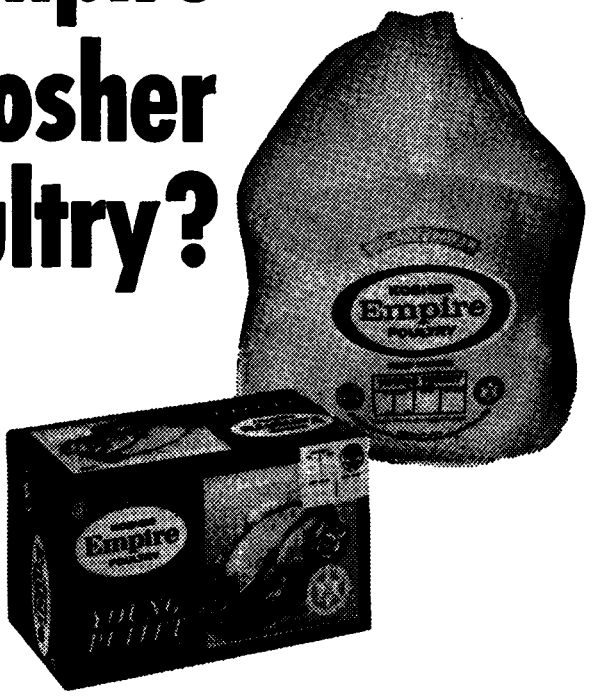

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> The American Civil Liberties Union is a nationwide organization devoted to the preservation of civil liberties. . . . It is filing this brief to express its views on the civil-liberties issues surrounding the disciplinary proceeding against Professor Bruce Franklin of Stanford University.

That quotation from the ACLU brief should also demonstrate the falsity of Mr. Packer's statement that "The chairman of the Advisory Board asked [me] to disclose [my] interest, if [I] had one," and that I professed to be outraged by this request. The chairman never requested me to disclose my interest, since it was well known to all from the beginning that I was interested in the civil-liberties and academic-freedom issues. Nor would I ever express outrage at such a request: I would proudly proclaim my interest, since I regard it as a virtue to be interested in—rather than neutral about—such issues. What the chairman did ask me to disclose was the nature of my consultation with either of the parties. This I could not do, because, in the words of a statement issued on behalf of the ACLU at that time, "To comply with such a request would significantly hamper [the ACLU's] important work in the area of civil liberties and would compromise the constitutional privileges of confidentiality." (Ultimately, the Board dropped its unprecedented requirement and the ACLU brief was filed over my name plus that of the Legal Director of the ACLU and, significantly, two of Mr. Packer's colleagues on the Stanford Law faculty.)

There was, of course, nothing improper about counsel for *amicus curiae* meeting with one of the parties. This is done all the time, by "interested" organizations that file *amicus curiae* briefs (such as the ACLU and the NAACP).

Mr. Packer strikes a particularly low blow in suggesting that there was something improper in Joel Klein's assisting Franklin since "the Harvard Law School . . . paid Mr. Klein to work for Mr. Dershowitz during his year at the Center." (Why else would Mr. Packer mention the source of Klein's funding except to imply that Harvard funds were being improperly diverted to the Franklin defense?) The facts are as follows: Mr. Klein was paid to assist me at the Center on the basis of a forty-hour-work week. Neither Harvard nor I imagined that we were purchasing Klein's entire day. During the course of the year he did many things in his spare time, including work on the McGovern campaign. What he did beyond the forty or so hours he worked on our academic project was entirely his business. When the Franklin case began, Klein did not *ask* me whether he could work on it, he simply *informed* me—that he would be working on it during his spare time. He assured me that any time he spent during the day would be made up by evening work. In fact, Klein's work on the academic project averaged well over forty hours a week, even during the height of the Franklin case (as anyone at the Center can attest). Klein was scrupulous to avoid using Harvard or Center funds on the Franklin case; he paid—out of his own pocket—for Xeroxing, postage, and other costs incurred in connection with the case.

As Mr. Packer well knows, hundreds of law professors—including many of his colleagues as well as mine—represent clients in their spare time, both with and without fees. Is Mr. Packer suggesting that this widely accepted practice represents an improper diversion of university funds? Or is it improper only when the cause is one with which Mr. Packer disagrees? Mr. Packer's not-so-veiled suggestion of impropriety on my part is extremely unfair; his gratuitous dragging in of Joel Klein, a young man who is not yet a member of the bar, is inexcusable. Nor can Mr. Packer claim ignorance on this matter. In a letter dated May 30, 1972, I informed him of the facts relating to Klein's funding and his involvement in the Franklin case. Moreover, at least three of Mr. Packer's colleagues advised him that there was no basis for any suggestion of impropriety and urged him not to publish it. I simply do not understand why Mr. Packer insisted on insinuating something he knew to be untrue.

One final word: I am proud of my involvement in the Franklin case. It was, I believe, important for an outside organization like the ACLU—and an outside professor—to bring another, less parochial, perspective to an issue with the nationwide ramifications of the Franklin dismissal. Mr. Packer's forced efforts to contrive accusations against Mr. Klein and myself for our participation in the case invites comparison to the unfounded accusations leveled by some in the South against Northern civil-rights lawyers who "intruded" themselves into the "local" problems of Mississippi and Alabama during the early 1960's. I am genuinely sorry that the issue has become so personal. I did not expect that it would. But innuendos and insinuations of the kind made by Herbert Packer cannot go unchallenged, lest we return to an age that I had assumed was long discredited among thoughtful people.

ALAN M. DERSHOWITZ
Harvard Law School
Cambridge, Massachusetts

HERBERT L. PACKER writes:

I never professed to question Mr. Dershowitz's longstanding devotion to civil liberties. His letter reveals that his devotion occasionally leads him into largely irrelevant outbursts that one hopes will cease. As for the case, Mr. Dershowitz has added nothing new to the Franklin affair in this lengthy emotional and self-serving exercise in prolixity. I refer the reader to the original article on the Franklin case (published in April) and to the exchange of letters (published in August). I hope that this is the last of the Franklin case.

Paul Goodman

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We mourn the death of Paul Goodman, one of the leading intellectual voices of our time, contributor to this magazine since its inception.

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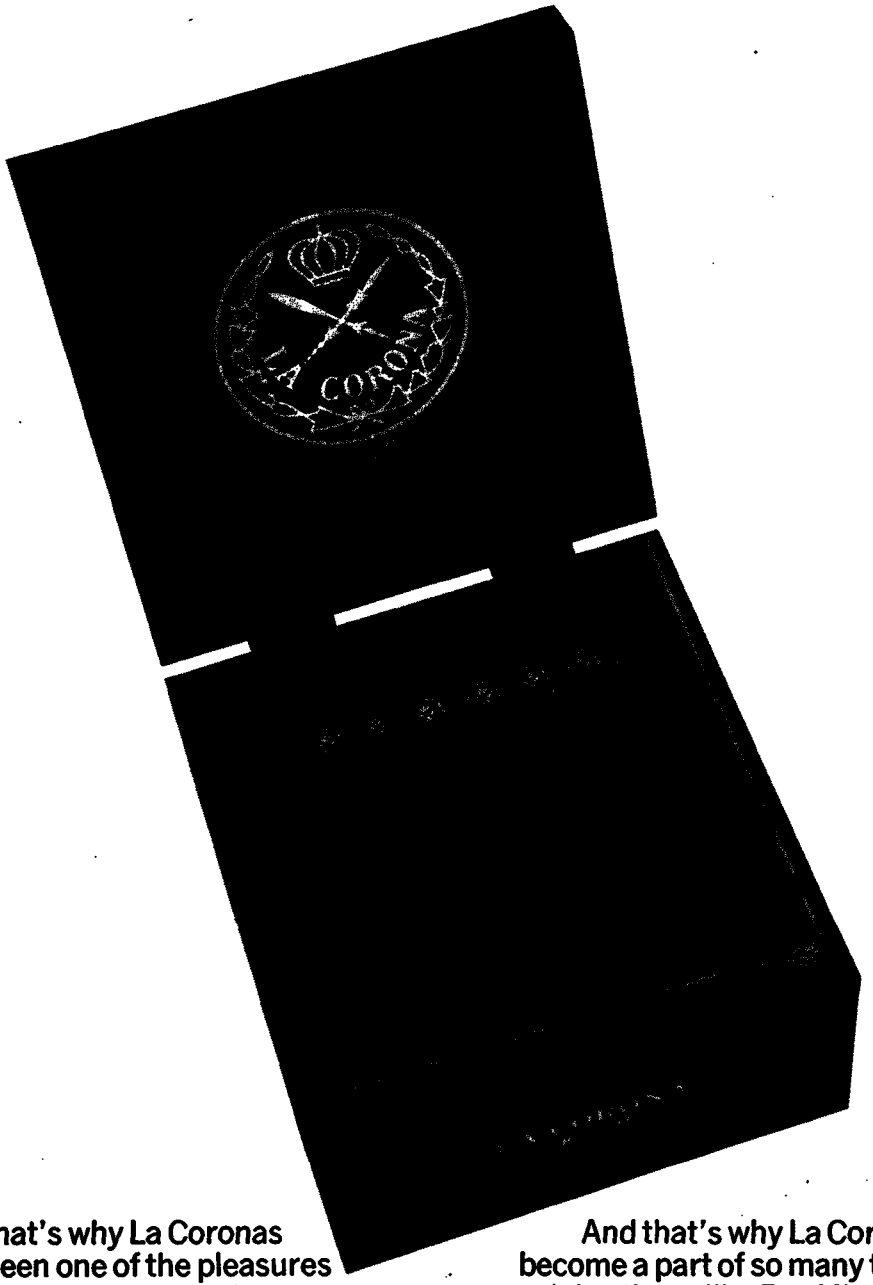

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McGovern and the Jews: A Debate

Nathan Glazer

Milton Himmelfarb

Because of the unusually intense concern evident everywhere with the question of whether and to what extent American Jews will depart from their customary allegiance to the Democratic party in the 1972 Presidential election, COMMENTARY *invited two of its regular contributors, one a supporter and the other an opponent of Senator George McGovern, to debate the role that Jewish interests should and will play in the coming election.* NATHAN GLAZER, *Professor of Education and Social Structure at Harvard, is the author of* American Judaism *and (with Daniel P. Moynihan)* Beyond the Melting Pot, *as well as several other books.* MILTON HIMMELFARB *(who of course speaks here as an individual) is one of our contributing editors; his* The Jews of Modernity *is scheduled for publication in January 1973 by Basic Books.*

Nathan Glazer

THIS will be the first electoral campaign in memory in which the question of specific Jewish interests may play a serious role in voting by American Jews. Of course there has been a "Jewish vote" in previous Presidential elections, but it has not been activated by any sense that one or the other candidate was unsympathetic to the special interests Jews have as Jews; rather it has responded to the degree of liberalism of the two candidates. Jews have for decades favored the candidate they perceived as the more liberal.

The situation in 1972 is quite different. The main reason, it seems clear, is that Senator McGovern in the past has expressed a more "even-handed" attitude toward the Arab-Israeli conflict than most liberal Senators—this is one sign that there are "radical" tendencies in his outlook. More significantly perhaps—since his recent statements in support of Israel go as far as anyone could expect, if not further—his general position in favor of the reduction of American military power and commitments abroad seriously raises the question of whether under a McGovern administration American aid would in a crisis actually be available to Israel.

There is a second reason for Jews to feel somewhat uneasy about a McGovern Presidency. McGovern seems committed, as the Democratic party reforms sponsored by a commission under his chairmanship demonstrate, to the mechanical "representation" of what are considered "deprived" groups—in the case of the Democratic party, women, youth, and racial or quasi-racial minorities. McGovern supports quotas in party affairs; he probably supports them in employment and elsewhere. Three of his closer advisers, John Kenneth Galbraith, Edwin Kuh, and Lester C. Thurow collaborated on an article in the New York *Times Magazine* last year* that proposed, as a solution to the problem of small numbers of non-whites and women in well-paying jobs, that such jobs be reserved to these groups in proportion to their numbers in the population. As readers of COMMENTARY need no reminding, a policy like this, of replacing equal opportunity with equal representation, must inevitably entail a restriction on the opportunities of Jews.†

It is thus evident that Jewish interests may be affected by the outcome of the 1972 Presidential campaign. But should a Jew allow such considerations to affect his vote? Should not the general interest—the interest of all Americans in peace and in social and racial justice—transcend the particular interests of 3 per cent of the American people? This is not a

*August 22, 1971.

†See Paul Seabury's "HEW and the Universities" and Norman Podhoretz's "'Is It Good for the Jews?,'" both in the February COMMENTARY, as well as the correspondence on these articles in the May, June, and July issues.

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question that is ordinarily raised today, either by Jews or by anyone else. Group selfishness has been elevated to a paramount position, and it is almost universally assumed that everyone—business, labor, farmers, blacks, etc.—will vote his own special interests without reference to the general interest, which has in any case become a very murky concept. But I think this is still an important question and should not be ignored. If indeed the interests of Israel were in opposition to general American interests; if indeed the Jewish concern with the opportunities that were opened up to them in the 1940's and 1950's and are now declining—the opportunity to enter good schools, to compete fairly in civil-service and other examinations, to compete for good jobs in government and education and business on the basis of merit—if these interests contradicted a necessary and just policy to repair the unequal treatment of blacks and other minorities, then Jews might well have to consider whether it was not morally incumbent upon them to vote against their own interests.

Let us reflect on these matters for a moment. It may be that American support of Israel is detrimental to American interests more generally conceived. It may be more important for the United States to compete against Russia for alliances with countries representing scores of millions of Arabs and hundreds of millions of Muslims than to support the survival of Israel. On this issue, however, I feel that the weighing of a general national interest must simply be set aside by Jews: the survival of Israel is for Jews an interest that must transcend all other interests. In World War II the survival of Jews was an interest that, as against the United States' capacity to make war in the most efficient and effective way, should have been given priority. Tragically, it was not. Today, it is an interest that, as against the capacity of the United States to compete with Russia for influence in the Arab and Muslim world—and this seems to me the most that can be said for an American interest in favoring the Arab states—must, for Jews, come first.

Admittedly we cannot simply *assert* our overriding interest in the survival of Israel. We must also defend it rationally (though it does not necessarily rest on rational grounds). We must argue for it. We must be capable of arguing that the survival of Israel is morally right, despite the agonizing problem of the Arab refugees. (Their claims can after all be to some extent met within a framework in which Israel survives as a secure state.) Most Jews and many others would also argue that the survival of Israel is fully consistent with American interests: it is a more secure ally than the Arab states would be; it is a stronger state; our only Arab allies would invariably be the more backward despotisms.

We can make one more pragmatic argument for the survival of Israel in terms of general American interests: the destruction of Israel would be such a severe blow to the morale of American Jews that the role of this small but influential minority on American life would undoubtedly become less healthy than it has been. It must be remembered that American Jews have, with their money and energy and influence, supported the protection and expansion of civil rights and civil liberties, they have worked toward a greater equality in income distribution, they have played a large role in financing liberal causes and liberal candidates. One may well wonder what the influence of American Jews in American life would become if Israel were to be conquered by the Arabs and the Jews thrown out or slaughtered. This is something that must be taken into account in considering whether the support of Israel coincides with American interests in general.

For Jews, then, the survival of Israel is a transcendent interest. If the survival of Israel coincides with the larger American public interest, well and good. If it does not—well, the United States is a big and rich country, and the reduction of its influence in the Middle East, or the loss of a point to Russia, should not outweigh this transcendent Jewish interest.

The Jewish commitment to equality of opportunity—and the benefits this principle brings to Jews—are another matter. First of all, the battle is already in large measure, I believe, lost. Wherever ethnic and racial groups conflict, in a setting in which dominance by one is excluded, quotas seem to come in—this is, I am afraid, the logic of the glacial movement in all societies toward greater equality. Even under Nixon—though spokesmen for the minority groups seem unaware of the fact—the Equal Employment Opportunities Commission and the civil-rights arms of HEW and other government agencies have been imposing the requirement for equality of representation with steadily greater harshness on institutions of higher education and on other large employers. The guidelines which require record-keeping for what is in effect the imposition of quotas have been steadily expanded from blacks to "Spanish-surnamed Americans" (a category which apparently embraces the descendants of Spanish immigrants, Cubans, perhaps even the occasional Irishman with a Spanish name), American Indians, and Orientals; no doubt they will soon include Eastern- and Southern-European immigrants and their descendants. And the similar requirement for much larger proportions of women in better jobs is already law, or at any rate is incorporated in federal guidelines which have the power of law.

Obviously in this area, Jewish interests are still at stake and require attention. But in a world in which such considerations steadily decline in

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response to the demands of equality, we cannot assign as much importance to the right of Jewish males to achieve good jobs on the basis of merit as we do to the Jewish interest in the survival of Israel.

UNDER these circumstances, can Jews —should Jews—support McGovern? I believe they can; and on the basis of other, more general considerations, I also believe they should. Of course, individual Jews will balance general interests against Jewish interests in different ways. For myself, I believe Jewish political influence in this country is such that any American President must give some support to Israel; and I believe the American experience in Vietnam is such that no American President—unless he is someone we should distrust as adventurist or unbalanced—will risk war with Russia to save Israel.

Admittedly between these two extremes of some support to Israel and no risk of war with Russia, there is a wide range of possible policies. That Nixon has leaned more to the end of accepting risk than McGovern would, I do not doubt; and yet how far toward that end can he really lean? One recalls a poll in which only 8 per cent of the American people were willing to go to war to protect Israel, an even smaller proportion than was willing to go to war to protect India! (To be sure, that was before our improved relations with China.) It would not be a popular—or even a possible—policy for this country to send American troops or to risk nuclear war for Israel. I believe that Vietnam marks a watershed in many respects. I am amazed that President Nixon still acts as if American military power could be used in defense of our allies and that other countries act as if they credit this possibility. I do not. We will send arms, we will send economic aid, we will move aircraft carriers around—though to what purpose I do not understand, since it is perfectly clear that these carriers will not be used against Russia or the Arabs to protect Israel. As President, George McGovern might do almost as much—at least up to the movement of the aircraft carriers. More than that, I doubt that even Nixon would ever do.

It is pointed out that McGovern as President would cut the military budget: would that not weaken credibility in the American commitment to Israel? Since I do not agree that the effectiveness of this commitment is based on the belief that America would actually go to war, I think some reduction in American military expenditures—whether 10, 20, or 30 per cent—is quite consistent with such a commitment. One understands that a good part of the military budget is waste anyway. Very likely the waste and the non-waste would be cut at roughly the same rate—that is probably the best one can hope for in view of the nature of budget-making and of bureaucratic power. We have spent billions on weapons that are useless, we are aware that the military keeps vast and unnecessary stores of goods, that it treats itself at the higher levels to lavish perquisites, that it maintains great numbers of unneeded bases in the United States itself which could be used to expand recreational facilities or for other civilian needs. We are aware of the fact that Congress, the military, and industry combine to insist on these wasteful expenditures. I myself would like to have in the White House a President who could stand against some of these expenditures and hold them to lower levels. And I do not see that the security of Israel would thereby be radically affected.

TO TAKE a larger perspective, I do not see that the security of Western Europe would necessarily be affected either. I have never understood why Western Europe, which is wealthier than Soviet Russia by far, requires an American military presence. East Germany and West Germany are settling the question of the two Germanies. We and our allies and the Russians are settling the status of West Berlin. Germany has accepted the frontiers with Poland and Russia. Why should not this approach to a permanent settlement be reflected in the reduction of our military presence in Europe? Who really believes that Western Europe is threatened by a Russian invasion? And if it is not, what is the purpose of the American army in Europe?

The purpose of American arms in the Far East is even more obscure. Most of the Japanese want us to leave. We should; the third most powerful economic state in the world is capable of managing its own defense. American bases and arms in the Far East permit us to pour bombs on Vietnam from Guam and Thailand and Okinawa. Yet can anyone say American security has been enhanced by the fact that we now maintain a military presence in Southeast Asia? I can think of only one good reason for holding onto bases in the Far East, and that is to keep American forces in South Korea. There they have truly maintained peace for twenty years against the bellicose North Koreans. But there have been recent indications that South Korea and North Korea themselves may come to some peaceful arrangement. We may thus in a few years be able to withdraw American troops even from Korea.

As for the rest of Asia: American bases are a disaster, for this country and the countries of Southeast Asia. American military support is a disaster. I do not believe for a moment that these countries would be less fortunate under the rule of Communist North Vietnam—and of course I fully expect that to be the fate of at least the area which formerly made up French Indochina —than they have been for the last seven years, suffering the effects of the horrible war that our

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presence alone sustains. Our efforts to play a role on the South Indian subcontinent are pitiful. Our arms have enabled Pakistan to engage in the most terrible crimes any nation has committed since World War II and to fight pointless wars against India. Our arms indeed have contributed to the abysmal poverty of both nations. If other nations wish to provide arms to this end, let them. We have no national interests there, except an interest generally in peace and development. Undoubtedly the least defensible action of the Nixon administration has been its support of the butchers of Pakistan.

George McGovern wants to reduce the size of the military, its role in the world, and the scope and scale of American commitments around the world. I agree. He has said he will not reduce the American commitment to Israel. Inevitably this commitment, whether by McGovern or Nixon, cannot extend to the use of American troops or warships, or to a serious risk of war with Russia. That is reality. I believe our interests as Americans demand an immediate withdrawal from South Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia. There is nothing we can do in those countries that can help them. This has now been demonstrated under both Johnson and Nixon. We can kill their people and destroy their land by our distinctively American ways of warfare, we can turn their daughters into prostitutes and their children into beggars, we can corrupt their rulers and their politics. This much we can do, and have. It is not clear that there is anything else we can do—at least we have not, under a number of administrations. Therefore we should leave, immediately. McGovern would leave.

This is the one and overwhelming reason why, as between Nixon and McGovern, I would stand for McGovern—having, however, also considered whether his election would represent an unacceptable danger to the survival of Israel and having concluded that it would not.

ON DOMESTIC issues, the balance between Nixon and McGovern is closer. Here my view of the specific Jewish interest and the larger American interest merge. I believe in equality of opportunity and the reward of merit, and not because they help Jews. I think these principles also help society. They make society more efficient and effective, they conform to a widespread sense of a proper moral order, they are necessary to help America compete with other countries—and it is perfectly clear from the balance of trade that America, with all its vast natural advantages, no longer competes very well with a country such as Japan which has none of these advantages. With equality of representation replacing equality of opportunity, I see America sinking—not rapidly, not insupportably, but inevitably. Nations do change in their capacity to produce and compete. Their values change, and clearly American values are today in large measure antagonistic to production and competition, and it is these antagonistic values that are represented by McGovern. One recalls with surprise that after World War II, even with so much destroyed by war, England was still the richest country in Western Europe, and after 25 years of small differences in growth rates, it is now the poorest. And yet the massive gradual shift leading the United States in the same direction seems to be irreversible. One can only hope that Japan and Western Germany will be next—and well they may. It seems to me no solution to vote for a man who makes speeches against the tide rather than the man who is ready to drift with it. What can speeches change?

On the whole, I prefer the way Nixon—or his advisers—have talked about American social policy to the way McGovern has talked about it. And yet we should not exaggerate the differences. In comparison with Kennedy and Johnson, both Nixon and McGovern are men who want to do *less* in domestic policy rather than more. Neither Nixon nor McGovern wants to follow the pattern of the 60's in which for each problem and each subdivision of a problem we devised a special program—or two, or three, or more—and funded them all, to some extent, and saw most of them fail. What, after all, does McGovern's domestic program amount to? The greatest emphasis has been placed on the guaranteed annual income of $1,000 for every American. In all the fuss about this proposal—which is crudely formulated and no doubt far too large—the similarities with the Nixon Family Assistance Plan have, surprisingly, been almost entirely overlooked. Both want to do away with a welfare system based in significant measure on social services to aid the poor and to institute instead a program to give money directly to the poor. Both wish to cover the working as well as the nonworking poor. Both want to replace diverse state and local programs with a federal program, and state variations with a national minimum. Both try to deal—better than the present welfare system does—with the problem of work incentive, and it can be argued that the McGovern approach, in which the income guarantee is in no way affected by earnings, is the more effective in creating an incentive to work. It will be recalled that one of the contributing ideas to the Nixon FAP was the child allowance, which Daniel P. Moynihan championed vigorously. The child allowance too has the virtue of being unrelated to earnings and therefore does not undermine the incentive to work in the way a system does in which the income guarantee declines with earnings. The child allowance also goes to every family, rich or poor, just as the McGovern allowance does. Of course there are important differences between the Nixon and McGovern plans—yet as one is modified in Congress, and

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the other is modified by political reality, they will come closer and closer to each other, even though the candidates will inevitably magnify the significance of the distinctions that remain.

THE interesting thing is that McGovern has talked about little else domestically. It is hard to know what he would do about housing, about urban renewal, about crime, about juvenile delinquency, about elementary education, about higher education, etc. McGovern apparently believes—if we are to take his relative indifference to specific domestic programs seriously—that the best way to solve the problem of the poor is to give them money. That is also what Daniel P. Moynihan believes, and what he apparently succeeded in getting President Nixon to believe. It is not only a Republican administration which no longer believes that we know how to solve specific problems with specific programs. The government-in-opposition at the Brookings Institution now also believes the same thing—and so, it would appear, do McGovern and his advisers. Certainly it would be naive to expect a President McGovern to act like President Johnson, even leaving aside the fact that he would come in with a narrow majority and probably also an antagonistic Congress. The age of poverty programs is over, and the age of income redistribution has begun. Amazingly, no one has noticed that Nixon and McGovern agree on this point—though Congress still seems to disagree with them both.

What else is there to say about McGovern domestically? Tax reform? Undoubtedly he would try to cut into the income of the well-to-do more sharply than Nixon has done. In this he would only be following the lead of most advanced nations with substantial social programs, and the inescapable arithmetic of the programs which both Democrats and Republicans, Left and Right, have already agreed on. The costs of giving subsidies for every student to every institution of higher education will be enormous—we are already committed to that by the higher education act. The costs of Medicare and Medicaid are already enormous, and there is no conceivable reform in health care that can substantially reduce the huge rate of growth in these costs. Social Security will cost more. Revenue sharing with states and cities will cost more.

All these are programs which McGovern, I assume, would support; some he would expand—such as the public underwriting of health care. What McGovern as President would find—and what would introduce sobriety into his proposals—is that there is not enough money even for the programs already written into law, and whose principles he accepts, and hardly any for the new programs he would wish to introduce. The issue would resolve itself into a choice between new taxation and more inflation. All this is the *déja vu* of all developed nations whose desire for social services outruns their capacity to provide enough through taxation, however much they soak the rich, to pay for them.

ONE comes back, then, to foreign affairs, and there the choice, for the Jewish voter, is between the man who acknowledges the moral and practical tragedy of Vietnam, and of American military policy in so many other places, and the man who makes no such acknowledgment but who has done more for Israel than any other American President. It will be a difficult decision for Jewish voters, and more of them are likely to vote for the Republican candidate than Jews have ever done before. For myself, I believe McGovern would do what an American President can do to ensure the survival of Israel. For just as no American President, even with all our arms and wealth, could ensure the survival of a non-Communist South Vietnam, there are limits to American power in the Middle East too. We must always live in fear and trembling when it comes to the survival of Israel, dependent as this survival is on Israel's own strength, on the financial and political aid of Jews in other countries, and on Israel's own good political sense. None of those things will change, whether Nixon or McGovern is President after 1972. And so, in the end, for me, Vietnam is decisive, and on that ground I support McGovern.

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Milton Himmelfarb

IT WILL be better for the Jews if McGovern does not win. Whether he wins or loses, it will be better for us if this year we give the Democratic candidate less than our usual crushing majority.

The Jews' overriding foreign-policy interest is Israel. More accurately, our overriding interest of any kind is Israel. If—which God forbid—Israel should cease to exist, do we not know in our bones that the Jews would cease to exist? We have not in us the stuff of our *galut* ancestors, and what they were able to do in the absence of a Jewish state we and our descendants will be unable to do; for we are barely able to do it in the presence of a Jewish state.

American Jews and Israelis must agree with Ben-Gurion: It is not that the Jews are for the sake of Israel but that Israel is for the sake of the Jews.

For American Jews, therefore, the interest in Israel is not what the interest in Italy is for our Italian neighbors. When Italy and Yugoslavia disputed the possession of Trieste, Italian Americans naturally sided with Italy. But that was a marginal question. The existence of Italy and Italians and *italianità* was not at risk. What Jew would not pray for Israel's problems with the Arabs to be like Italy's with Yugoslavia? With Israel it is not a question of this city or that, these borders or those. Yugoslavia, and her friends, did not deny Italy's right to be Italy.

It is 3,750 years since Abraham began Jewish history, a history of some consequence. If Israel's friends do not worry about her, both Israel and that history will come to an end. And if the Jews do not worry about Israel, why in the world should anyone else?

For a Jew, accordingly, McGovern's inferiority to Nixon should be manifest. The case is not what it would be if, say, Humphrey were running against Nixon. Then a supporter of Nixon could argue that Nixon's deeds were more important than Humphrey's words, but he could hardly say that the words were not good words, or that they had not been good from the outset. With McGovern, on the other hand, even the words are recent, quite different from his former words, and therefore dubious. In the press of the campaign he is now saying to Jews things about Israel that are marked by all the fervor and sincerity of Governor Rockefeller's eating knishes in Jewish neighborhoods during *his* campaigns for office.

How reassuring can it be to Jews that the Arabists of the National Council of Churches (like the anti-Israel secular Left) were rapturous about McGovern's nomination? And though people like Senator Ribicoff tell us that Richard Stearns is not really all that close to McGovern, should we be reassured when Stearns, with his anti-"Zionist" and pro-"Palestinian" record, is quoted (in *New York* magazine, July 3) as saying: "I would like to have the most responsible job in this Administration that I could have. I didn't go through this for the simple exercise of nominating and electing a President"? (In the press of the campaign a new Stearns now says he agrees with the new McGovern.) Or should we be reassured because McGovern has said that Senator Fulbright would make a good Secretary of State? Fulbright —whose coldness toward Israel chills us.

Nor will it do to say that we should listen to the present McGovern, rather than the McGovern of a few years ago. How seriously can we take the new pro-Israel statements and planks of a candidate whose policy is diplomatic and military withdrawal? Nixon has made his remarkable new approaches to the Soviet Union (and China), but the United States Sixth Fleet remains in the Mediterranean, a barrier for Israel against a Russian attack. Of what use will McGovern's new professions of friendship and support for Israel be when he recalls those carriers from the Mediterranean?

Much has been written about Israelis in high places telling American Jews that Nixon, unlike McGovern, is a proved friend, and therefore worthy of support. We hardly need Israelis to tell us something so obvious.

IN DOMESTIC matters the great question today is what equality and justice mean. McGovern and the McGovernites define equality and justice in a way that is bad for the Jews—and bad for America as well.

Their definition is the one that somehow, without real discussion and almost behind our backs, has come to be accepted by the Best People. Equality and justice used to mean No Discrimination (against individuals), now they tend to mean Fair Shares (for groups). How does one assure Fair Shares? By legislating proportionality, or quotas. Can anything be clearer than that a principle of group Fair Shares must be fatal for the Jews?

When we think of discrimination—unfairness, injustice—against Jews in the United States, the example that comes most readily to mind is that of the medical schools between, say, 1920 and 1950. It was not that the proportion of Jewish students in American medical schools was lower than the proportion of Jews in the American population, even in those bad old days. It was that many Jewish candidates for admission to medical school were kept out, though qualified, because they were Jews. For us the incontrovertible proof of injustice and unfairness, and of their especial wickedness *in America*, was that Fascist Italy—Fascist Italy!— opened the doors of its medical schools to Americans shut out as Jews by American medical schools. The discrimina-

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tion was against qualified individuals, and by "qualified" we did not mean passable; in many cases we meant superior. (It was Jews who told the contemptuous joke about the stutterer who accused the radio station which had not hired him as an announcer of being anti-Semitic.)

No Jew agreed with the excluders' defense, that there was no discrimination, because the Jews, only x per cent of the American population, were $x + y$ per cent of medical students. How could percentages, or quotas, justify the injustice to *this* individual, excluded though meriting inclusion? Was it not self-evident to any rational person that trying to reconcile quotas with democracy was like trying to square the circle? Quotas were part of the feudal world of ascription, with the different estates having different privileges and duties, and estate deriving mostly from parentage. Were Americans proud of the Constitution's one lapse into that system of ascription—toleration of hereditary slavery?

To talk about these things today it is necessary to use the past tense. Today, and precisely among the advanced and educated—the successors to those whom a generation ago we could appeal to as rational—quotas no longer are self-evidently feudal, but seem to be of the essence of democracy. The Republican Mr. Pottinger of the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare has been bestowing the blessings of quotas on the universities; and the Democrat Mr. McGovern has been promising appointments, from the bottom to the top, by quota. (Except that "quota" is still felt to be an unattractive word, so its agents deny the word while doing the thing.) Though President Nixon cannot avoid the responsibility for Pottinger, Pottinger is not close to Nixon; but Senator McGovern is close to McGovern.

But it does not end there. McGovern's quota system applies to more than government jobs (and university admissions and appointments). Among his economic advisers are Edwin Kuh and Lester C. Thurow, co-authors, with John Kenneth Galbraith, of "The Galbraith Plan to Promote the Minorities," in the New York *Times Magazine* for August 22, 1971. That plan is quite simple—quotas in business and industry. (I envy the young, and the young in heart, who do not experience my occasional difficulties in grasping that while American women, who are more than 50 per cent, are a minority, American Jews, who are fewer than 3 per cent, are not a minority. Among others, Galbraith, Kuh, and Thurow explain it all to me, but I suppose I am a slow learner—just as I am slow to learn what everybody who is anybody knows about the Middle East: that Israel, with a Jewish population of 2½ million, is a Great Power.)

Whether tactically or because they themselves are not entirely happy about quotas, many argue for quotas—group Fair Shares—as only a temporary device, necessary now for undoing the effects of past injustice, but to be discarded as soon as they have served that purpose, in favor of a true, substantive and not merely formal, principle of individual No Discrimination. Anyone who believes that is allowing hope to triumph over experience: *rien ne dure que le provisoire,* nothing is so permanent as what is temporary. Once you give people a special privilege, you can as easily take it back from them as take back meat from a tiger. Have we been able to take back the depletion allowance from the petroleum industry, or agricultural subsidies from Senator Eastland?

Presidential candidate (eight years from now, or forty-eight): Group Fair Shares have done their job, and it is time to go on to individual No Discrimination.

Accredited minorities, HEW staff, deans of minority students, coordinators of Spanish-surname research: Male chauvinist pig! Racist! Fascist! Insensitive!

For Jews the outcome is unmistakable. Now we are lumped under "white," or "other." But as the white and other are subjected to their residual quotas, and as new whites and others, inevitably, come onto the scene to make their separate claims—Italians, Poles, Southerners—how long can it be before it occurs to those whites and others who are not Jews that the differentiations within "white and other" should in all fairness be reflected in subquotas? Manifestly, if fairness requires proportionality and quotas, it cannot be fair that the Jews, who are so few, should have so many good things and good jobs. Fair Shares—let the Jews' good things and jobs be in proportion to their numbers. (And how far are we from the time when "women" will discover that they are not a unitary, undifferentiated minority, so-called, but that some are black, and some are Jews, and so on; and that by the justice of Fair Shares, Jewish women are getting too much?) Concede the major premise, Fair Shares, and the conclusion is irrefutable.

BUT WHY concede that premise? Why, especially, should Jews concede it? Those Jews who refuse to concede it have been accused of engaging in mere, mean-spirited defense of their turf. Of course, when any other group defends its turf, everyone understands that to be, if not necessarily admirable, then at the very least natural. Apparently it is only the Jews' defense of their turf that is mere, and mean-spirited. But in fact we are not dealing here with a defense of turf, in anything like the sense of straightforward economic interest. The logic of proportionality does not, cannot, stop with vocation and job.

For a concrete illustration of what is at stake here, I wish I could incorporate the whole of Jerome Karabel's "Open Admissions: Toward

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Meritocracy or Equality?," in *Change* for May 1972. Karabel is described as a researcher for the American Council on Education, the roof or umbrella organization of the American colleges and universities. No doubt he thinks of himself as nonconformist and anti-establishment, but in matters of this sort, can anything be more establishmentarian than an article by someone on the staff of his organization?

For our purposes, he says two things of interest. The first is that a generation ago the increasing reliance upon individual ability or merit for determining whom to admit and whom not to admit to colleges and universities, and the decreasing reliance upon ascription (birth, group), was a victory for democracy and equality; but that today—for reasons not explained very clearly—reliance upon individual merit or ability is undemocratic and unegalitarian. The second thing of interest he says is that it is not enough for everyone who wants a college education to be admitted to a college; as long as some colleges are academically more selective than others, there will be unjust inequality. In other words, the University of Chicago has no right to be fussier about its students—and presumably about its professors—than Podunk A. and M. In that view, distinctiveness/distinction is inherently and necessarily the enemy of democratic equality, and must be done away with. What of the academy as a community of scholars, a constituent of the international republic of learning, the place where Mycenaean studies can be cultivated, together with hopelessly impractical, pure mathematics? To ask that question is to show you believe—or, for motives not hard to divine, pretend to believe—in the discredited ivory-tower notion of the university. If this is the wisdom of people who are supposed to care about the universities as universities, why should we be surprised that it is also the wisdom of HEW "change agents"?

A letter in COMMENTARY (May 1972) has reported that when the chairman of a graduate department of religion in an Ivy League university said that a knowledge of Hebrew and Greek was prerequisite to admission, HEW representatives told him to "end those old-fashioned programs that require irrelevant languages and start programs on relevant things which minority-group students can study without learning languages."

If that frame of mind, the new treason of the clerisy, is made even more official than it already is, hard times will have arrived. Every ordinary Jew is dependent upon, is nourished by, learned Jews and the learned Jewish tradition. Jewish scholars have to know—in addition to the Jewish languages—Greek, Latin, and who knows how many modern European languages (for reading the scholarly literature). Some scholars also have to know Arabic, others Akkadian and Ugaritic. A friend of mine teaches in that very department, in that university. He has had to learn Middle Persian.

From all of which it emerges that if we protect the Jewish interest—and this one, at least, surely is not very crass—we will also be protecting the American interest, against those who go lusting after relevance, and would use both the bureaucracy and the courts to impose it. (What would Edmund Wilson have said about government, and liberal Babbitts, decreeing that languages are irrelevant?) When classical and biblical studies had begun to decline among the Protestants, there were some among them who consoled themselves that the Catholics were carrying those studies forward. Now that the Catholics seem to be going the way of the Protestants, it may be the Jews—and precisely the most Jewish Jews—who are running with the torch. I am told that at Columbia a striking proportion of the young men who are studying Aeschylus and Lucretius sit in class with their heads covered by *kippot,* and are never there on a Jewish holy day, no matter how "minor."

Of more immediate, and practical, political consequence is it that some Jews, because of their Jewish experience and sensibility, are helping to remind America that individual No Discrimination, not group Fair Shares, is the good, authentic American idea.

A FEW observations remain to be made, of a more (or an even more) internal Jewish character. It has been said that American Jews are deserting the Democratic candidate because of economic conservatism—that is, because so many of us are rich, and McGovern has a soak-the-rich tax program. Whether so many of us are rich is questionable, despite all those Wall Street types the writers love to mention and quote; but certainly, on average, the Jews of Scarsdale are richer than the Jews of Congressman Celler's district in Brooklyn. I will bet that the Jews of Scarsdale go for McGovern more than the Jews of Celler's congressional district—an odd sort of economic conservatism.

It has also been said that middle-aged Jews should think twice about preferring Nixon to McGovern, for fear of further widening the already wide generation gap, and alienating the Jewish young even more. Nonsense. The radical children of conservative Jewish parents are anecdotes, not statistics. Radical Jewish sons and daughters have liberal-to-radical parents—who are apt to be more liberal-to-radical than they are Jewish, and who know that the current liberal-to-radical thing is to be for quotas, and McGovern. In the Florida Democratic primaries, while the elderly throughout the state voted for the victorious Wallace more than the young did, the Jewish elderly voted for Wallace not at all. They preferred Humphrey, giving him a larger margin

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over McGovern than younger, more prosperous Jews did. (The evidence for Florida has been analyzed by Professors Lipman and Strauss of the University of Miami.) There are generation gaps, and generation gaps.

A certain amount of blackmail is being exercised here. I was in Israel during the Democratic convention, and in *Ma'ariv* for July 7 that great and good Jew Abbie Hoffman was quoted as saying:

> Any Jew who supports Nixon is a Gentile [Hebrew: *goy*; or did Hoffman use the word "goy" himself?—MH], even Golda Meir. . . . I am pro-Jewish [that's nice—MH] but anti-Zionist [i.e., denying the right of a State of Israel to exist—MH].

How will the Jews vote? Everyone is agreed that in 1968 we gave Humphrey 80 per cent or a little more, and Nixon between 15 and 20 per cent. The projections of the Jewish vote for Nixon in 1972 that one sees in the papers range all the way to 50 per cent. But old habits die hard, and many a Jewish arm will be too paralyzed to pull the Republican lever in a Presidential election. Besides, by November the fudging and blurring of McGovern will have proceeded enough for most Jews to do what they want to do, and are comfortable doing—vote for the Democrat. The forecasts of people whose judgment I respect are between 25 and 35 per cent. My guess is 25 per cent.

More would be better, and less would be dangerous. It is good to have the politicians competing for our support; but why should they compete if we do not show we are prepared to reward friends and punish enemies? Even if McGovern is elected, it will do us no harm at all if he senses in us a certain coolness, or reserve. It was because the Jews, more than all other whites, supported Mayor Lindsay that he decided to reward us with his plan for Forest Hills and all the boons, internal and external, material and moral, that go with it. If there had been fewer Jewish votes for Lindsay—especially in Forest Hills—he would have treated the Jews more considerately, or at least circumspectly.

Is there any use fighting? Aren't quotas inevitable? Shouldn't we accommodate ourselves to the wave of the future? For instance, shouldn't we begin now to train our children for vocations less dependent on government and large organizations (and on a college education)? I have heard a professor at a rabbinical seminary speak in that vein to his students.

But I also remember what Isaiah Berlin said about twenty years ago in his lecture on *Historical Inevitability*: the irresistible, often, is only the unresisted.

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Needing Niebuhr Again

Michael Novak

Realism means particularly one thing, that you establish the common good not purely by unselfishness but by the restraint of selfishness. That's realism.

—Reinhold Niebuhr, 1969

Many of the New Left find Niebuhr's theology a buttress to the liberal establishment and, as such, a prime ideological target.

—John C. Raines, in *Christianity and Crisis*, 1969

Nothing has happened to refute the realistic analysis of the stubbornness of evil in society or the tragic side of history. No return to a pre-Niebuhrian optimism is possible.

—John C. Bennett, "Christian Realism: A Symposium," 1968

Is it only a year since Reinhold Niebuhr died? It seems like ten. His strong but broken body had not yet surrendered when "new historical situations" were being proclaimed and his work discounted as a period piece. Niebuhr's "Christian realism," Tom Driver said, "was essentially defensive or conservative."

Not long ago, Niebuhr towered over Christian political thinkers in the land. Now the new Movement—of moralism, hope, vision, and radical analysis—appears to have tumbled that once lofty tower or, far more sadly, to have wandered past it into a desert.

Undoubtedly, the structure of Niebuhr's thought must be enlarged, redirected, given a deeper and more accurate base. Yet it will be enough, in celebration of his memory, to apply the basic insights of his thought to those who so easily think to replace him. The new moralism we see all around us is all too like the old moralism, against which Niebuhr directed the central energies of his life. In many ways it is as if he had lived and worked in vain.

I

In 1960, Reinhold Niebuhr wrote in the terse preface to the paperback edition of *Moral Man and Immoral Society* (1932): "I still believe that the central thesis of the book is important and I am still committed to it. The central thesis was, and is, that the Liberal Movement both religious and secular seemed to be unconscious of the basic difference between the morality of individuals and the morality of collectives, whether races, classes, or nations." And later: "This distinction justifies and necessitates political policies which a purely individualistic ethic must always find embarrassing."

Forty years ago, as now, many looked forward to "the greening of America"; it is our most ineradicable national fantasy. Niebuhr's polemic was explicitly addressed against those "who imagine that the egoism of individuals is being progressively checked by the development of rationality or the growth of religiously inspired goodwill and that nothing but the continuance of this process is necessary to establish social harmony between all the human societies and collectives." Niebuhr listed his foes: "social analyses and prophecies" based on "the natural bias of the educator" (that social conservatism is due mainly to ignorance); and the "middle-class prejudices" of social scientists and "modern religious idealists." He knew exactly what he opposed:

> What is lacking among all these moralists, whether religious or rational, is an understanding of the brutal character of the behavior of all human collectives, and the power of self-interest and collective egoism in all inter-group relations . . . they do not see that the limitations of the human imagination, the easy subservience of reason to prejudice and passion, and the consequent persistence of irrational egoism, particularly in group behavior, make social conflict an inevitability in human history, probably to its very end.

Niebuhr then described what he took as the task of his entire life:

> . . . the task of analyzing the moral resources and limitations of human nature, of tracing their consequences and cumulative effect in the life of human groups, and of weighing political strategies in the light of the ascertained facts. The ultimate purpose of this task is to find

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political methods which will offer the most promise of achieving an ethical social goal for society. Such methods must always be judged by two criteria: (1) Do they do justice to the moral resources and possibilities in human nature and provide for the exploitation of every latent moral capacity in man? (2) Do they take account of the limitations of human nature, particularly those which manifest themselves in man's collective behavior?

"Christian realism," wrote John C. Bennett in 1968, "developed in a polemical situation in which there had to be a special concern to counteract the one-sided optimism and idealism of the liberalism of the time." In every generation, realism changes its meaning. As William Ernest Hocking once said, "realism is not a philosophy but a boast." Who judges himself unrealistic? It is indispensable, then, to keep in mind an outline of Niebuhr's life and to recreate in imagination the situation of American Protestant theology and politics during that period.

Gustav Niebuhr, Reinhold's father, came to Illinois in 1878. The family had been, in Germany, of substantial means; Gustav left home out of rebellion rather than need. In America, after working as a farm hand, he became a Lutheran pastor. Reinhold's mother was a second-generation German-American, the daughter of a minister. Three of their four children became professors of theology, including Hulda, their daughter. In 1915, Reinhold left Yale with a B.D. degree (his first B.D. was from Eden Seminary in St. Louis) and an M.A. He was restless with merely academic work, and owed an obligation to his church to serve in the ministry. There followed thirteen years as pastor to a small but heterogeneous parish in Henry Ford's Detroit. (Niebuhr's slim diary of 1929, *Leaves from the Notebook of a Tamed Cynic,* falls just short of being a classic.) Beginning in 1925, Niebuhr contributed unsigned editorials and signed articles to *The Christian Century,* unmasking Henry Ford's pretensions to "humanitarianism." But against the power and established interests of Ford, Niebuhr's religious individualism and liberal illusions seemed puny and sentimental.

In late 1928, Niebuhr moved to Union Theological Seminary as professor of social ethics, the position he held until the end of his active career. He became involved in the Socialist party, running as its Congressional candidate in 1930. He at first opposed Franklin D. Roosevelt, only later (1940) came to admire FDR's pragmatism. John Dewey's "optimism" and "rationalism" were early polemical targets for Niebuhr; later, they worked together in many common political causes, helping, for example, to establish Americans for Democratic Action.

Niebuhr's main efforts were directed against that "Protestant Christianity" in America whose "optimism had no more solid foundation than the expansive mood of the era of triumphant capitalism" (*An Interpretation of Christian Ethics,* 1935). He realized from the first that America suffered from a kind of secularized religion. The nation conceived of itself almost as if it were a church, a "movement" of social goodness. This "civil religion" had infected secular men as well. He wanted to introduce maturity into the civil religion: "Our modern liberal culture, of which American civilization is such an unalloyed exemplar, is involved in many ironic refutations of its original pretensions of virtue, wisdom, and power" (*The Irony of American History,* 1952).

In 1939, Niebuhr gave the prestigious Gifford Lectures in Edinburgh, whose fruit was his classic *The Nature and Destiny of Man* (two volumes). In defense of the democratic idea he wrote *Children of Light, Children of Darkness* (1944), in which appeared one of his most famous aphorisms: "Man's capacity for justice makes democracy possible; but man's inclination to injustice makes democracy necessary." Others of his best-known books are *Faith and History* (1949), *The Self and the Dramas of History* (1958), and *The Structure of Nations and Empires* (1959).

In 1956, Niebuhr suffered the first of a series of strokes which greatly weakened him, forced him to desist from his extraordinarily active ways, and left him for fifteen years mentally keen and eager but unable to work for longer than an hour or two a day. One of his most brilliant books, *Man's Nature and His Communities,* appeared during this period (1965).

NIEBUHR was at his best in reinterpreting the religious springs of the American past. His aim was effective social reform in American institutions, particularly in the 1930's on behalf of labor. Since power is normally blind and unyielding, Niebuhr did not shrink from those limited uses of violence required for social change. He argued strenuously that even decent husbands, family men, men of honor are obliged by social structures to act according to social roles. Private morality is therefore no sufficient guarantee of social morality. (The obverse—not stressed by Niebuhr, but perhaps exemplified in some persons responsible for the war in Vietnam—is that participation in social wrongs is no necessary guarantee of private dereliction.) Good men are often involved in policies, even honorably involved, whose social consequences, here or there, sooner or later, wreak great evil. Brutal men, with evil intentions, sometimes bring about social good. Pure intentions, high goals, and unblemished radicalism of mind do not absolve men of the ambiguous consequences of what they estimate to be their

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most morally radiant actions. Political life does not follow the form of a morality play; it is tragic.

Niebuhr was at his weakest, I believe, where his reputation is highest: in international affairs. Nevertheless, his strength in such matters, sufficient to win him the gratitude of men like George Kennan and Hans Morgenthau, was threefold. He unmasked many of the moral pretensions of America by ripping to shreds traditional religio-ideological interpretations of American destiny. Secondly, he concentrated the attention of moralists upon issues of power and interest—he refused to leave to Machiavelli the things of Machiavelli. Thirdly, he gave the genuine moral strivings which are the great, indisputable resources of our nation's capacity for maturation, a new, tougher, more supple religious base than they had heretofore had.

In order to understand the old moralism against which Niebuhr inveighed, we must recall some American Protestant history. America is perhaps the first land in history founded by people who urgently wished to be saints. There were three components of this desire: a profound instinct for the superiority of the Anglo-Saxon race; a sectarian, utopian spirit of concern; a complacence with the grace that God, through science, industry and progress, daily sheds upon America.

In the North, we read American history Southward. We tend to exaggerate the importance of the Puritans and the sober Calvinists of New England. The Southern evangelism so poorly understood by those of us not part of it, is regarded by its partisans, surely a religious majority in American life and dispersed throughout every region, as the strong, ironlike backbone of American life, the center of the mainstream. What *we* regard as "mainline Protestantism"—the kind of churches the Rockefellers go to, sedate chapels at Yale, Harvard, and Princeton, that mixture of private piety, oak-walled economic power, and technical education provided for Episcopal, Presbyterian, and United Church scions we have known—is a minority tradition. Because of its money, position, and power, it has dominated our government, courts, and universities. But when American Protestants have faced a major parting of the ways between Northeastern modernism and experiential fundamentalism, they have nearly always chosen the latter. This has happened, for example, in "The Great Awakening" of 1720-25; the defeat of Jonathan Edwards in New England and his migration to Princeton Seminary, the later bastion of orthodoxy; in the great revivals of the 19th century; and perhaps in the recent amazing growth rates of Pentecostalism and other fundamentalist movements.

The dark, tormenting thoughts of Hawthorne or Melville, or even Faulkner, have not affected our character nearly so much as the optimism of the fundamentalist Christian. Such a Christian believes that the organism is healthy, disease comes from *outside*—germs, agitators. Carried along by him, we believe in the *future*. We believe in—we require—new frontiers. We believe in *changing* things, confident that cosmic probabilities are weighted enormously, in our case at least, on the side of good. Let someone announce a product is "new"—from toothpaste to politics—and our unconscious minds are tutored to expect it to be "better." We also believe in *action*. Through fundamentalism, our God is the God who *acts* in history. Thus even our conservatism, even our fundamentalism, encourage no scruples concerning gadgetry, industry, super-highways, supersonic transports. With *ideas*, with dissent and divergence and disloyalty, however, religious conservatives do have difficulty. For to those who know they are on the side of the future, dissent is not simply an annoyance; it is a delaying tactic, a useless sidetrack. "Come home, America" is not really a cry to return to the past; it is the symbol of the better future that yet will be. Thus has George McGovern instinctively understood that conservative Protestant traditions use retrospective language for futuristic purposes.

Nathan Glazer remarks in *American Judaism* that Judaism can best be understood less as a "religion" in the sense of church and doctrines, and more as a "religious civilization." Similarly, besides Christianity as a religion in America, there is also America as a religious civilization—there is what Robert N. Bellah has called "the civil religion." The civil religion allows for the freedom of other religions. There is "separation of church and state." But intermediate between church and state, pervading both of them, lies the quotidian civilization whose self-understanding is suffused with inescapable symbolic materials. These affect the self-understanding of Catholics, Jews, atheists —all who live, move, and have their being within their ambience. They are cited regularly in the great documents of our history, in inaugural addresses, at high political turning points.

Thus the primordial problem for Protestant Christianity in America is to distinguish itself from the civil religion. It was easy to separate church from state. To separate church from *culture*, to prevent the church from becoming "merely" a cultural religion, is an especially acute problem for the evangelical Protestant traditions, more so than for traditions of the Jewish, Catholic, or "high" Protestant type. For the evangelical traditions—those of the sects and denominations—conceive of themselves as voluntary associations, generated through the conversion of adult individuals, held together by a communal discipline that sets them apart from "worldliness." This model of religious association is believed to be peculiarly parallel to the democratic way of life.

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It is atomic, associative, voluntary, consensual. And in this very marked coincidence between evangelical forms and democratic forms lies the danger of confusing religious life with political life. Imagining American institutions to be in a peculiar way the fruit of evangelical religious traditions, ordinary Christians can hardly be blamed for sensing few dangers to Christianity from total absorption into "the American way." America is "a Christian nation."

Testimonies to Protestant confusion on this point abound in every period of American history. At the time when Reinhold Niebuhr was just coming into prominence, the situation seemed not more bleak than earlier, but suddenly subject to question. Wilhelm Pauck and H. Richard Niebuhr, Reinhold's brother, together with Francis P. Miller, wrote *The Church Against the World* (1935). (The fact that two of the three authors were German-American is significant. The emergence of major theologians who were not Anglo-Saxon undercut the racial pride that was one pillar of the old moralism.) Miller wrote: "The plain fact is that the domestication of the Protestant community in the United States within the framework of the national culture has progressed as far as in any Western land. The degradation of the American Protestant church is as complete as the degradation of any other national Protestant church." Worldliness, the three authors went on, dominates the church "in thought, in organization, and in discipline." In "the century and a half of Anglo-Saxon assuredness," everyone had believed that no other people besides Anglo-Americans could carry out God's mission.

SYMPATHETIC historians commonly picture the images of history favored by American Protestants—images of "building up God's Kingdom," even "the social gospel"—as in some harmless way rhetorical. But those images were riverbeds for the rush of power, political and economic, that gives substance to the title of Martin Marty's brilliant history, *Righteous Empire: The Protestant Experience in America.** Marty writes astringently of the early years of the 20th century: "The agents of God happen to be Anglo-Saxon Americans who had funds to invest in the world, guns with which to subjugate the yellow Spaniards, and a spiritual superiority which gave them license to determine the destinies of others." Anglo-Saxonism was conceived as "God's highest human revelation to date." "We are the chosen people," wrote Josiah Strong. "Can anyone doubt that the result of this competition of the races will be the 'survival of the fittest'?"

In 1855, noted church historian Philip Schaff had written: "I doubt whether the moral influence of Christianity and of Protestantism has more deeply and widely affected any nation than it has the Anglo-Saxon." Two British Christians wrote in 1836: "Blot out Britain and America from the map of the world, and you destroy all those great institutions which almost exclusively promise the world's renovation." And Schaff again: "The Anglo-Saxon and Anglo-American, of all modern races, possess the strongest natural character and the one best fitted for universal dominion."

Charles Hodge of Princeton asserted in 1829 that America will exert "a greater influence on the human family than any other nation that has ever existed." A century later, Protestants were exhorted to "see this nation of ours . . . become not only the savior but the model and monitor of the reconstructed civilization of the world in the future." The Southern Bishop Warren A. Candler, brother of the Coca Cola magnate, wrote (c. 1926): "The hope of mankind is in the keeping of the Anglo-Saxon nations, led by the United States; and evangelical Christianity, with Methodism in the forefront, is the hope of these nations." Candler understood assimilation: Anglo-Saxons are "not only the people directly descended from the Anglos and the Saxons, but those who, by collateral descent or by political association with them, have been conformed to their type and identified with their destiny."

But World War I, the advances of industrialization, the fruits of Prohibition, and the Depression were steadily eroding conviction. Even in 1927, H. Richard Niebuhr observed that "a psychology of defeat, of which both fundamentalism and modernism are symptoms, has grabbed the forces of religion." Wilhelm Pauck, one of a distinguished line of emigrés who settled here, surveyed the desolate American Christianity of 1935: "Perhaps the time is not far distant when a prophet will rise among us who, fully imbued with the mood and spirit of our era, will speak to us in the name of the living God with such power and authority that all who long for salvation will be compelled to listen." Marty adds succinctly: "In Reinhold Niebuhr, many Protestants began to feel they had found such a prophet."

Niebuhr was not alone, of course, and not all intelligent Protestants, by far, accepted the chauvinism whose depth and breadth in the tradition retain such power to astonish. Still, the verb critics and biographers routinely choose for Niebuhr is *towered*. Words of his like "irony," "tragedy," "ambiguity," and "realism" interrupted the stream of sectarian optimism. The rise of Hitler discredited the intellectual supports of Anglo-Saxon racism. Niebuhr turned his attention to puncturing the moral optimism and complacence in industrial progress that university professors—even of the acumen of John Dewey—shared with city editors and county sheriffs.

The battle between realism and idealism had first to be waged in his own heart. In 1914, Niebuhr, perhaps compensating for his German-American origins, had enthusiastically abandoned

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pacifist scruples and supported the war. Later he repented, joined the Fellowship of Reconciliation, and wrote articles in support of love, reason, and peace. A decade later, after his experiences in Detroit, he once more renounced pacifism. (He understood quite clearly that even nonviolent pacifism, like Gandhi's, implicates one in violence.) In religious terms, he began to read St. Augustine on the savagery of the earthly city and Luther on the evil in every human heart. In social terms, he began to read Marx. He thus made one "turn to the Right," toward religious orthodoxy, and a "turn to the Left" in accepting the need for at least limited forms of violence and socialist revolution. Both helped him to interpret experiences he otherwise could not account for. During a trip to Europe in 1936, he saw that his worst fears about Nazi Germany were coming true. He returned to the U.S. trying to sound the alarm. He established networks for bringing refugees here.

Most American Protestants were still in the grip of "love" and "reason." Thousands of young men on the campuses were taking pledges "never to go to war." Giant peace rallies were staged. Charles Clayton Morrison's significantly titled *The Christian Century* continued to be the forum for Niebuhr's attacks on pacifism, "America First," and sentimental interpretations of love and reason. The counterattacks mounted in intensity. So strongly did Niebuhr disagree with the editorial position of *The Christian Century*, that together with his friends he launched *Christianity and Crisis* in New York. The year was 1941. The crisis was the threat of Hitler to Western civilization. The gloom of those days, difficult to recreate today, was thick. Many felt the dread, described by Norman Mailer in *The Naked and the Dead*, that a night of reaction was about to descend upon every nation of the world.

JOHN C. BENNETT has recently described the history of *Christianity and Crisis* and listed four ways in which its vision, especially in the 1950's, was not quite adequate in preparing its readers for what would follow: the implications of nuclear warfare; changes within Communism and the receding of the cold war; the need for revolutionary change in the Third World; and "the errors and dangers of the American counterrevolutionary stance, especially in the Third World." And he adds: "I think that Christian realism may have neglected the extent to which secular history may be influenced by what we may call the continuing effects of redemption, including the signs of resurrection."

Niebuhr often admitted during his last years that he should not, for pedagogical purposes at least, have chosen "original sin" as the symbol on which to base his analysis of self-centeredness and self-deception. Such a symbol did not allow him to treat as fully as his program demanded the "moral resources and possibilities in human nature." That symbol, together with his preoccupation with the menace first of Hitler and then of Stalinist Russia, gave a defensive, negative cast to his thought, in betrayal of his own explicit intentions.

Still, Niebuhr's very roots in classical Germanic pessimism (through his Lutheran reading of Augustine) introduced new "moral resources and possibilities" into the American mainstream. Christopher Lasch has recently noted that the European revolutionary tradition carries with it "a tragic sense of the cost of even the most brilliant civilization." A revolution is not a glorious, holy event. It is, as thirty Spanish anarcho-syndicalists announced in a manifesto in 1932 (the same year as *Moral Man and Immoral Society*), "a tragic and cruel event which forms man only through the suffering of his body and the sorrow of his mind." Culture is the capacity of a people to live with ambiguity, tragedy, irony, and defeat. In that sense, America lacks culture. Our best novels, Lasch notes, are "books written in defiance of civilization as represented by Aunt Polly." We are a nation retarded in adolescence. No wonder we are so utterly susceptible to the cult of youth. Our models for morality are pre-moral, merely (in Kierkegaard's term) aesthetic, callow.

Niebuhr wedded in his own person the dark, even self-torturing stirrings of the Lutheran tradition and the clear-sighted instinct for "changing the world" of America's high Calvinism. "Contrition" was one of his favorite words. An image that recurs in his writings, as in those of Luther, is that of a man broken, shattered, "under judgment." (In reality, Niebuhr appears to have been a tall, aggressive, dominating man who wished he were more broken and humble, whose traditions told him he should be, and finally during fifteen years of incapacitating but bravely-borne illness was.) On the other hand, no banker at Chase Manhattan, no Ivy League college president, had a clearer eye for the actual lay of power and interests. We sometimes forget what it is like to be on the other side of a deal with "a shrewd Yankee trader." The Yankee gazes with endlessly honest, sincere, reliable eyes—no contract necessary, a handshake will do—and *still* gets the better of the bargain. The shrewdness lies in making honesty do what other people do through rituals of deception. Niebuhr had the Yankee instinct for practicalities. He also had a Lutheran conscience about it.

Thus, as a man from the heartlands, Niebuhr was able to enter into "mainline" Protestantism. He was uncommonly alert to changes in the world, to the shifting sands of power and ideas and symbols. His best writing, in fact, was almost invariably his journalism; his books were rather like attempts to state systematically and fully what he had already discovered in contact with events.

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He did not carry with him heavy hypotheses of such grandeur that events merely served them by unfolding. He was, rather, a thinker whose intelligence penetrated events to an uncommonly profound level—seeing in them the drama of selves and groups which they partly revealed, partly masked. Self-deception was his fundamental theme. He had a dramatic sense of action and politics, such as in a different sphere Kenneth Burke was always commending. Burke concentrated on the "grammar" of such dramas, Niebuhr on their concrete unfolding.

Niebuhr changed positions often, not erratically but as cultural dramas changed. He understood quite clearly—he alluded to it in an article on Karl Barth, the Swiss founder of "Neo-Orthodoxy," with whom he was often paired—that his own resolve to stay close to actual events, rather than to more speculative heights, doomed his work to a certain transience. He knew that no disciple of his could *repeat* his own positions, views, even principles. A genuine disciple would have to respond as intelligently to events in his time as Niebuhr had in his.

What saved Niebuhr from mere expediency—and this is a point difficult for some to grasp, prickly even to state—is that he remained consistently faithful to a dramatic, developing standpoint. It would be difficult to isolate in Niebuhr's life any set of principles or axioms to which, over the whole range of his maturity (say, from his third book, *Moral Man and Immoral Society* in 1932), he remained faithful. Key words like "pacifism," "love," "justice," "equality" underwent fairly radical transformations as his thought and experiences matured.

Biographers and seasoned students of his thought have, therefore, taken to describing his development according to "stages," or "periods," or (occasionally) "motifs." Ronald Stone,* for example, distinguishes four periods: the disillusioning of a liberal; the socialist alternative; Christian realism; the pragmatic-liberal synthesis. The pattern is biographical, dramatic. Seeds of the later developments are discernible in the earlier. One could not have predicted just where Niebuhr would be going after any one moment; on the other hand, surprising as some of his "turns" were at the time, in some strong way they always seemed consistent with Niebuhr the man. There was a reason for them and that reason, more often than not, had to do with fresh experiences he had encountered and refused merely to grind up within his former system. In contact with events, he always saw to it that *he* changed, too. On that organic fidelity to himself was his impressive lifelong consistency built.

The deficiencies in such a method become clear when one recalls the enormous expansion of consciousness imposed upon educated people during the last fifteen years. There is no way to judge how Niebuhr would have changed under the pressures that altered the consciousness of the rest of us. It would have been marvelous to have had him at the height of his powers during the turbulence of the 1960's; instead, he could only be an occasional and inevitably distant observer.

Niebuhr needed events. At the end, a Methodist bishop visiting with him expressed surprise that Niebuhr's eyes filled several times with tears. "Perhaps it was the drugs," the bishop charitably remarked. Perhaps it was the pain, the humiliation.

II

In his last years, Niebuhr described his own inner life for John Cogley. He was closer, he feared, to Jewish symbols than to Christian. The social justice he had found most eloquently expressed in the Hebrew prophets was, he said, his most identifiable religious passion. In the brilliant, retrospective, quasi-autobiographical *Man's Nature and His Communities*, Niebuhr commented explicitly on revisions in his views: ". . . they gradually change from a purely Protestant viewpoint to an increasing sympathy for the two other great traditions of Western culture, Jewish and Catholic. They also embody increasingly the insights of the secular disciplines . . . of an empirical and historical culture." He speaks of "the tortuous path" of his own mind "in adjusting the Protestant heritage of individualism and perfectionism through a world depression and two world wars to the present realities of a highly technical and collective culture, facing the perils of a nuclear age."

Niebuhr's mental life was one of constant enlargement. The accusations of restless young men, anxious to go "beyond" him, therefore, are often couched in respectful phrases. Had Niebuhr been well, he might have shown the way on three issues in particular: black liberation, the politics of the Third World, and the new moralism.

Frequently, complaints have been voiced that Niebuhr did not dare to hope enough; that his realism, increasing with the years, persuaded him to settle for too little. John C. Raines has suggested that Niebuhr gave too much attention to perverse inclinations like pride and sensuality, not enough to the far more common social sin of sloth, apathy, passing the buck. In 1939, critics point out, fewer than eight thousand of America's eight million black Protestants worshiped in integrated churches. Why, they ask, did Niebuhr not propose more revolutionary action?

Perhaps he should have. On the other hand, what needed to be done for blacks in America needed to be done by blacks. Andrew Young of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference re-

* *Reinhold Niebuhr: Prophet to Politicians*, Abingdon Press, 272 pp., $8.00.

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called at the thirtieth anniversary of *Christianity and Crisis*, only weeks before Niebuhr's death:

> I remember one night when somebody came at [Martin Luther King] with some of the philosophical presuppositions of strict Gandhian nonviolence, and he responded about three o'clock in the morning with the most brilliant lecture I had ever heard on *The Nature and Destiny of Man*, Reinhold Niebuhr, and the thinking of John Bennett and *Christianity and Crisis*. He reminded us that he had done his Ph.D. thesis on Paul Tillich, and you realized how everything he did was formulated much more out of a sense of Christian realism and out of the historic black reality of the Christian Church in the Southern part of the United States than I think the press ever really understood.
>
> We always (at first) tried to make nonviolence something that was very idealistic and ethereal and for the saints to live by, and never really understood, as Dr. Niebuhr said as far back as *Moral Man and Immoral Society*, that nonviolent power and economic withdrawal would be the means that the black community might eventually use to gain justice.

The great events that preoccupied Niebuhr's attention during his creative years were the depression, the world wars, and the nuclear competition between Russia and the United States. He thought crisply in terms of powers and interests, and his *The Structure of Nations and Empires* (1959), which some of his students seem to regard as one of his weakest books, fastened upon the twin phenomena of nationalism and imperial systems. It is not difficult, then, to imagine how Niebuhr would have related his earlier investigations to present Third-World theories of revolution, particularly in Latin America. A transformation in context would, of course, have been required. A sharper distinction between the positive resources of American culture and the arrogance of American power would have tempered Niebuhr's praise of "the open society." If any American was prepared in advance to assimilate the humiliation of American virtue, wisdom, and power in Vietnam, it was Reinhold Niebuhr.

But did his "realism" make such doublethink as appeared among the subjects of the Pentagon Papers all-too-normal? Had he given too much ammunition to the "hardheaded," to the "tough" pursuers of "the national interest"? Did he contribute to the weakening of brave witness against the "necessities" and "realities" of "tragic decisions" and "wars of ambiguity"? There is a feeling among many that he sold them too easily on "compromise" and "facing present realities." Early-warning indignation systems, they feel, might have spared America disaster in Vietnam.

Niebuhr himself was one of the earliest and most profound critics of the war in Vietnam; so also were men who had learned from him, like Hans Morgenthau, John Bennett, and William Pfaff. But several other considerations are relevant here. Niebuhr believed thoroughly in the importance of "countervailing forces." The overweening power of the American Presidency increasingly appalled him. The fraudulence of appeals to "reason," or "support for the President," or "the defense of American honor" was transparent to him. The cloaking of imperial designs with moral rhetoric was no new ruse.

Less than others, however, was he shocked by America's "mistakes," or "unconscious imperial instincts," or "deliberate adventures" (whichever theory about our Vietnam involvement one accepts). He never thought power should be trusted. He never trusted claims to virtue or wisdom.

Moreover, Niebuhr's early criticism of the presuppositions of certain powerful trends in the American social sciences anticipated by decades the orgies of self-criticism we have witnessed these last six years: tendencies toward depersonalization, manipulation, complacent gradualism, heedlessness about quality, community, and ends. From *Moral Man and Immoral Society*, through *Faith and History*, to *The Self and the Dramas of History*, and in such essays as were collected in *Christian Realism and Political Problems* (1953), Niebuhr opposed a one-dimensional, optimistic, manipulative realism. His was a realism alert to subjective viewpoints, organic connections, historical contingency and incompleteness, and the biases of interest and power.

A major social change did, however, take place during the period in which Niebuhr was writing and he may not have been fully aware of it. The number of managers, experts, bureaucrats, consultants, sound engineers, technicians, administrators, staff assistants, and white-collar professionals grew exponentially. Professional football with its ruthless precision, corporate timing, and calculated realism became the nation's central symbolic ritual. The perfectionism and individualism that were once Niebuhr's chief foes were giving way to professionalism and organization. "Realism" and "collective consciousness" were becoming the dominant way of life among America's professional elites.

In this sense, Niebuhr's work was all too frequently losing its earlier prophetic bite and becoming the rationalization of a new status quo. "I hate to do this," the new hardnosed realist began to say. "In the best of all worlds it wouldn't be necessary. But within the parameters of reasonable probabilities, it's the best we can do. We'll have to bite the bullet." In the gallery of model Americans, the tough pragmatist, expert and professional, replaced the pious huckster of snake-oil and the well-connected, silver-haired Episcopalian banker.

IN RESPONSE to the rise of this new national superculture of rootless professionals, streaming from the most extensive net-

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works of universities any nation in history has ever spawned, there has also been a resurgence of perfectionism and individualism. Ironically, then, what cutting edge Niebuhr's razor lost on one side it acquired on the other. The McGovern Democrats are nothing within the bounds of their specialties if not masters of technique, professionals, realists. On the other hand, they manifest and they often encourage a most traditional American moralism. "Together at the Garden with McGovern" on June 14 was as sentimental an effusion of a peculiarly American idealism, teardrop for teardrop, as any the Garden has ever sheltered, including the Crusades of the Reverend Billy Graham. "*If only*," Dionne Warwick crystallized the mood, "*we have love!*"

This new moralism is, to be sure, not so much a repetition as a transformation of the old moralism. For individualism, it supplies "Do your thing!" For perfectionism, it supplies "*When the world will live as one!*" There will be no religions, no countries, no ethnic or racial differences, no conflicts or ambiguities, no tragedies or betrayals or defeats—"*If only we have love!*"

The new moralism has been partly successful in awakening the traditional civil religion of the nation. The critics of the war in Vietnam, forgetting their disgust at the moralism and self-righteousness of John Foster Dulles, reintroduced personalist moral discourse into political matters. Some day I imagine a future Daniel Ellsberg releasing secret memoranda from the Pentagon, revealing that certain key officials *knew* they should have taken certain immediate military steps. But an election was coming up, and so deeply seared had the popular consciousness been by the cry "*No more Vietnams!*" that, despite the clear moral imperative, they deemed it "realistic" not to act. As fears of another Munich were used to justify intervention in Vietnam, fears of another Vietnam will surely justify some future—and equally disastrous—nonintervention.

In domestic affairs, meanwhile, race has become the simplistic key to everything. Black men were dying disproportionately in Vietnam, "Gooks" were pushed out of helicopters, and revisionist views of Custer's Last Stand lifted corners on the awful story of the treatment of the red man by the white man. "White racism" became for the Left the smear "Communism" had been for the Right. The guilt was insupportable; sensitive and innocent souls rushed to dissociate themselves from it. "They" became the evil ones: the racists, the fascists, the pigs. Children of the upper classes, attended to in their individuality as children never had been before, were consumed with self-loathing.

Protestant thinkers of sectarian background are quick to see that their own tradition is coming back in force, after scarcely a generation of "mainline pragmatism," and they have been quick to soften the Niebuhrian heritage. "Our policy," the usually cool John C. Bennett writes of *Christianity and Crisis*, "has been to give a platform to those who push the white man hardest [he does not say "most penetratingly"], for we see that white racism is a deeper cultural sickness than we realized in the early 60's." Harvey Cox notes that Niebuhr introduced "Augustinian-Reformation realism" into the dominant form of American religion—that "Christian visionary sectarian type of ethic that has had terrible problems and wonderful possibilities." Cox, a Baptist, notes his own roots in the latter and adds:

> We have been scourged and corrected by history and by theological reflection since then. But I think there is something very valuable in that tradition which nonetheless can form political action in the future. It is interesting to me that this latter tradition is the one that makes sense to those who are theologically interested and religiously aware among the political activists on campuses today.

Mentioning his experience of living in a black neighborhood in Boston, Cox warns against Niebuhrian pessimism: "A confidence in the morality of one's own cause not too complicated by strictures that warn against its possible distortion and its sinful defilement are very necessary when you talk to people who have been on the bottom."

George Williamson, Jr., decries the way in which Christian realism has become the ideology of social engineers: "But the effect glorified by an American pragmatic spirit is a specifically predictable and controllable effect." He writes then of "our two sectarian groups—our two radical outbreaks of charisma," the blacks and the youth:

> The rise of sectarian charismata among these groups manifests a common, communicable, operational, and immediate perception of actual evil in this particular world and an attendant sense of identity, integrity, and value in the commitment to "overcome" or to "give peace a chance"—i.e., operationally to redeem themselves from this actual evil.

UNLIKE the old moralism, however, the new moralism is not confined to Protestants. It embraces Jews and Catholics as well, and it draws its attitudes from Jewish, Catholic, and indeed from secular sources as well as from Protestant ones. Nathan Glazer has pointed out that some 80 per cent of American Jews come from Eastern Europe; and that the Enlightenment struck with especial force among Jews in that portion of Europe. He suggests that "socialism, anarchism, Zionism, and other radical secular political movements flourished among the East European Jews, particularly those who moved to the cities from the small towns." He attributes to the persecutions, political insecurities, and age-old state of underprivilege the pronounced tendency of Jewish immigrants in America to support

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liberal and radical social causes. How could they not believe in "the possibility of change"?

As for Catholics, there is the peculiar romanticism to which some of them, once aroused on political matters, are not only prone but almost driven. On the conservative side, Belloc and Waugh in England, Claudel and Bloy in France, and perhaps William F. Buckley, Jr., and Garry Wills in the United States, suggest the qualities of wit, poetry, fancy, and acerbic commentary the romantic tradition can supply. The aura of mystery; the calm of sempiternal perspectives; the awe surrounding gigantic struggles between good and evil; a special love for the "witness" who according to the lights of this world fails; a delight in twitting mere pragmatists, empiricists, and "liberals"; a zest for hide-and-seek drama like Chesterton's Father Brown or Father Berrigan's masquerade party at Cornell—these inform the literary Catholic's special blend of moralism.

The mandate of Pope John's Vatican II, moreover, to "take the Church into the world" offered many good liberal Catholics an escape from the pettiness of intramural Catholic politics, into the larger world of "the secular city." Slowly came the shock that city hall and the FBI, the university and the federal bureaucracy, are, if less colorful, as intransigent and pragmatic as the New York Chancery. A certain number of Catholics went from conservative or non-political to radical without ever passing through liberalism—Garry Wills is an example of the first, Sister Elizabeth McAlister an example of the second. Finally, the rude political awakening of *a*political and even *a*theological missionaries to Latin America, like the Melvilles, imparted a note of revolutionary fervor. Even the once sober *Commonweal* scarcely resists a note, now and then, of what Monsignor Knox once chastised as "enthusiasm," that breach of sober realism which Thomas More and Thomas à Becket, in their extremity, were so careful to avoid. Among many liberal Catholics, American pragmatism had a short life of less than a decade.

III

In politics attitudes are not reality; power and interests must be diagnosed. The new moralism differs from the old because its power and its interests differ. Michael Harrington suggests in *Toward a Democratic Left* that our economy is creating a social structure which vastly enlarges "the conscience constituency." This attribution of "conscience" to a political class shocks a Niebuhrian. "In general," Harrington explains, "the more educated a group, the greater is its sensitivity to 'ethical' questions in politics." He cites the optimistic view of James MacGregor Burns that the suburbs may well be "more responsible to bold leaders who stress issues of the mind and heart, and not just of the stomach." There is something beguilingly deceptive in this self-flattery of educated professionals.

No doubt the higher income and suburban living of what David T. Bazelon calls "the New Class" have solved some of the issues of the stomach; such people are not starving. No doubt, too, they turn to politics in order to satisfy "mind and heart." Such a turn is not ipso facto "ethical." In 1967 in *Power in America: The Politics of the New Class*, Bazelon recognized the transformation in American class structure and attitudes:

> So the great new mass of more or less educated people, primary beneficiaries of the postwar "income revolution," devoted worshipers of children and automobile culture, has become the decisive swing group to mediate and perhaps finally to resolve the classic American conflict of the city-dweller and the small-town agrarian, the immigrant and the Wasp, and at last to dispel the effects of agrarian ideology.

The skills of this class are precisely as we have seen them in the McGovern campaign of 1972. Such skills, Harrington writes, quoting Bazelon, are essentially social, for they are based on "a great number of people who mostly organize, and administer and criticize and comment on the activities of others." Their chief strength is planning. Bazelon worries that they might "proceed woodenly to administer everybody and everything." Even Harrington sounds a warning:

> . . . a new class is coming into being. It is not the old middle class of small-property owners and entrepreneurs, nor the new middle class of managers. It is composed of scientists, technicians, teachers, and professionals in the public sector of the society. By education and work experience it is predisposed toward planning. It could be an ally of the poor and the organized workers—or their sophisticated enemy. In other words, an unprecedented social and political variable seems to be taking shape in America.

The New Class covers its political campaigns—in 1968 as in 1972, in the civil-rights movement and in the anti-war movement—with an aura of morality so thick it would make the righteous Anglo-Saxons of a century ago envious. Because two of its chief causes—civil rights (including poverty) and resistance to the Indochinese war—are morally sound, it has been able to conceal its own lust for power and its own class interests, at least from itself. On several counts, its interests are less than "ethical."

First, although the New Class denounces the "system" and complains about its own "alienation," its power, wealth, and status depend to a vast extent on an activist federal government committed to "change." In the old politics, patronage consisted of local favors: a streetlight, a city job. In the new politics, patronage operates on a national scale: federal initiatives making hundreds of thousands of jobs and opportunities available to those whose hearts itch to do good

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and who long for a "meaningful" use of their talents, skills, and years.

Secondly, the New Class has special psychic interests. It somehow feels it must exorcise its complicity in various social evils: white racism, militarism, imperialism, male chauvinism, consumerism, affluence. Acute discomfort at moral accusations distorts the vision of this class and makes it politically volatile. In this respect, it is rather like that "resentful" class Richard Hofstadter wrote of in *Anti-Intellectualism in American Life*: it tends to project its own guilts upon scapegoats, in this case lower-middle-class whites. A desire to escape ambiguity and to be thoroughly good is an ambivalent political resource, as American history amply reveals.

Thirdly, the New Class is tempted to be good at the expense of others. It supports school busing, for example, but its own children will not suffer loss of status, or quality education, or wealth, or safety by being bused. The New Class will not lose what lower classes lose. And the New Class mandates, plans, and executes the busing. The children of the lower classes—black and white—are the clients, but *they* are not, it would seem, entitled to "participate in the decisions that affect their lives." Or again, although the means and strategies of warfare have been generated by the skills of the New Class as by no other (the research and technology responsible for the peculiar savagery of the war in Indochina were not developed by truckdrivers), that class has managed for the most part to keep its own sons out of Vietnam.

In domestic politics, Niebuhr is correct in his advice that we ask of any group: What's in it for you? He is also correct in his estimation that justice is approximated not through a "conscience constituency" but through restraints upon the interests of each and every constituency. It is high irony, of a sort Niebuhr would have savored, that the New Class in finding his realism "dated" has conveniently overlooked precisely his most central theme: that claims on the part of groups to represent "conscience," "morality," and "principle" must be exposed for what they are: disguises for naked power and raw interest. Characteristically, Niebuhr noted, such disguises are nowhere more successful than among their propagators, self-deceived at the core of their apparent decency, goodness, and innocence. *Beware of the children of light* is, perhaps, the fundamental Niebuhrian imperative. It is an imperative desperately relevant now that the new moralism has acquired awesome professional skills and organizational abilities, now that it afflicts *our* class.

IV

One characteristic of the New Class is its need for "attitudinal" correctness. So, although attitudes have little to do with actual political effects, we must track the new moralism on its own terrain. The attitudes the New Class commends are revealed to be moralistic by five signals.

First, moralism uses indignation, outrage, and feelings of guilt to energize reform. A mature morality, by contrast, recognizes that in politics personal guilt is less significant than changes in institutional structures; that as an emotion guilt paralyzes clear thinking; that convulsive attempts to liberate one's conscience lead to excesses that generate yet another cycle of evils to be guilty about tomorrow.

A second signal is a need to base political action upon a conviction of moral superiority. Christopher Lasch, for example, dangerously urges that the Left, before it can become effective, "needs to demonstrate the superiority of its moral vision and its theoretical understanding." But in order to act well, one does not have to feel that one's cause is "morally superior." It quite suffices to believe that one's own path, so far as one can determine, increases the possibilitis of human community and human liberty. Granted all we know of the relativity of standpoints and human fallibility—and on few matters ought we to be more thoroughly informed—we may presume our political opponents to be equally convinced of their own righteousness.

A third signal lies in taking actions in order to think *oneself* good, rather than in order to achieve solid political results. This self-centered desire prevents one from facing defeats, betrayals, and one's own responsibility for evils unwittingly generated. In politics, the quest for innocence is futile. A democratic system functions in strict dependence even upon those who do not participate; they, too, are part of the calculus by which the organized gain and keep power. We are already implicated. No one has clean hands. "The quiet American," who wishes to do good, involves all who touch him in tragedy.

A fourth signal lies in the search for "optimism" and uneasiness with "pessimism." Various cultures understand this polar relationship differently. The Anglo-American sectarian tradition demands so high a quotient of hope, such assurance that effort will "make a difference," that it is extraordinarily prone to despair. It sets a high premium on vision, apocalypse, utopia. By contrast, certain writers of Southern and Eastern Europe—Camus, Silone, Moravia, Kazantzakis, to name but a few—have given expression to a profound pessimism that does not prevent courageous action. In order to act well, it is not necessary to believe that one will succeed. Human morality, both in persons and in societies, lies in the substance and the form of action, not in its contingent fruition. The sower sows; God giveth the increase.

"Realism," of course, can itself become a kind of moralism. One prides oneself on yielding to

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"things as they are," feels superior to those who do not, deadens one's imagination so as to avoid disillusionment. "A good realist may be humble and have a healthy irony about his own virtue," George Williamson writes, "but there is nothing quite so withering as his scorn of someone who will not acquire and employ the techniques that he has learned." Thus, a fifth signal: the moralistic form of realism is managerial, bureaucratic, subservient to technique; it employs pessimism as a motive against imagination. By contrast, a mature political morality searches out unexpected, long-range sources of aspiration and strength. It does not take a morose delight in being blocked. It prides itself on inventiveness. For though it has come to expect evil frequently to win, it accepts no such victory as final. Realism turned moralistic is defeatist; maturity is a source of long-range struggle. The one paralyzes action; the other finds in defeat reasons to act, in hopelessness ways to endure.

NIEBUHR himself gave testimony to such differences between moralism and morality over and over again, as in this passage from a lecture he included in *Christianity and Power Politics* (1940), called "Optimism, Pessimism, and Faith:"

> "Religion," declares Whitehead [in *Science and the Modern World*], "is a version of something which stands beyond, behind and within the passing flux of things, something which is real and yet waiting to be realized; something which is a remote possibility and yet the greatest of present facts; something that gives meaning to all that passes and yet eludes apprehension; something whose possession is the final good and yet is beyond all reach; something which is the ultimate ideal and yet the hopeless quest." These paradoxes are in the spirit of great religion. The mystery of life is comprehended in meaning, though no human statement of the meaning can fully resolve the mystery. The tragedy of life is recognized, but faith prevents tragedy from being pure tragedy. Perplexity remains, but there is no perplexity unto despair. Evil is neither accepted as inevitable nor regarded as a proof of the meaninglessness of life. Gratitude and contrition are mingled, which means that life is both appreciated and challenged. To such faith the generations are bound to return after they have pursued the mirages in the desert to which they are tempted from time to time by the illusions of particular eras.

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From Globalism to Isolationism

Walter Laqueur

ONLY a dozen years have passed since President Kennedy in his inaugural address spoke of America as "the watchman on the wall of freedom": "Let every nation know, whether it wishes us well or ill, that we shall pay any price, bear any burden, meet any hardship, support any friend, oppose any foe, to assure the survival and success of liberty." Since that time the pendulum has swung to the other extreme and the burden most Americans are willing to bear in the world today appears slight indeed. According to a Harris poll taken in May 1969, for instance, only 8 per cent of Americans recorded themselves as being in favor of sending troops if Israel were threatened with extinction by a Soviet-supported Arab attack; the corresponding figures for West Berlin and Italy were only slightly higher. And President Nixon himself has announced the new direction of American foreign policy as one of encouraging a much greater degree of self-reliance in the small nations of the world.

The reasons for this radical shift—a shift from interventionism to isolationism—will be studied for a long time to come. The Vietnam disaster has no doubt contributed to hastening the process of American disengagement from the policy of globalism, but it is likely that the process would have occurred anyway, sooner or later. The United States was drawn reluctantly into a leading role in world politics in the aftermath of World War II. It undertook that role without much enthusiasm, without real experience, and without strong support from public opinion. The anti-Communist passions of the early 50's were hardly a firm basis on which to build a global policy. There was no long-range perspective; measures were taken on an ad-hoc basis, in response to the actions of the other side. A sustained effort to pursue a global policy needs a sense of mission, perseverance, and a ruthlessness that are uncharacteristic of American society in general. Small wonder then that the neo-isolationist mood has found such widespread acceptance among virtually all sectors of American opinion in such a relatively brief period of time.

But whether or not this would have happened without Vietnam, the fact remains that Vietnam is the crux of the matter. This war cost tens of thousands of American lives, not to mention the immense financial burden. It devastated wide stretches of Vietnam, brought in its wake all the brutalities of modern warfare, and (as was clear by 1967 at the latest) it could not be won. In the circumstances it is not surprising that domestic opposition grew—opposition not just to Vietnam but to the whole policy, and the assumptions underlying the policy, which had presumably landed America in Vietnam in the first place.

Neo-isolationism as a mood is thus understandable enough—one might go so far as to say it is in the American grain—and it clearly holds a great attraction for a people that has paid billions for globalism and received little in return but seemingly permanent conflict and the cordial enmity of "progressives" everywhere. Among its more ardent proponents, however, neo-isolationism is not just seen as a necessary if regrettable step, a retreat from world affairs that has been necessitated by changes in the political situation both at home and abroad, but is hailed as highly desirable on its merits. The present American policy of interventionism, this argument runs, is a reflection of some of the worst impulses in American society. It is pursued by a foreign-policy establishment that is itself in thrall to the interests of big business, the prosperity of the American capitalist system depending on overseas expansion and imperial domination. It thrives on the propaganda image of a Communist "enemy" that is totally at odds with reality in this era of reconciliation and peaceful coexistence. And its overall effect has been to transform America into the policeman of the world, vaingloriously seeking to impose its own sense of order and its own style of life on all the peoples of the earth. Only by withdrawing from its global ambitions, this argument concludes, and by turning to the urgent tasks awaiting it at home, can

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America hope to regain its self-confidence and thus its position of moral leadership in the world.

Each of the elements in this bill of particulars deserves some attention.

THE charge that American foreign policy is run by big business, and that the economic prosperity of the United States depends on overseas expansion, is one that has been made repeatedly by radical critics since World War I. It has the advantage of simplicity and consistency, but unfortunately it is not borne out by the facts. It cannot explain, for instance, why the U.S. in World War I supported its economic rivals against Germany, a country with which it had no economic conflict. Or why it repeated this mistake in World War II. The radical revisionists claim that in the 30's "Roosevelt cast his lot with the nations that were least inimical to the interests of the American establishment."* But not the slightest economic friction existed between the Berlin-Rome axis and the American establishment, whereas Britain was a major rival and the Soviet Union was not exactly idolized by the U.S. business establishment. It could of course be maintained that out of shortsightedness or stupidity big business has not always acted in accordance with its own best interests, but to say so is already to render the revisionist theories suspect.

The argument from class and economic interest continues to be made today, with regard now to the countries of the Third World. America, it is said, needs the underdeveloped countries first of all for investments and as a market for exports, and secondly as a source of raw materials. The first point, once the crux of the Leninist argument, is no longer seriously believed except by a few fundamentalists. The second thesis, on the other hand, still has a great many believers. They admit that American business is not anxious to invest in the Third World and that more and more American trade takes place with the developed countries. But according to the Harry Magdoff-Gabriel Kolko school, America needs columbium and beryllium and titanium and certain other rare metals crucial to its heavy industry that have to be imported from Third-World countries and that necessitate an imperialist policy.† Now, there is *no* industrial nation which possesses all or even most of these rare metals, none which does not import them from various faraway places. Every industrialized society is "imperialist" from this point of view, and the smaller it is the more aggressive it has to be to get the raw materials it needs. Sweden, in other words, has "objectively" far greater cause to pursue an imperialist policy than the United States. Such a usage of the notion of imperialism reduces itself to absurdity, quite apart from the fact that the dependence of the industrially developed countries on the Third World has with one or two exceptions steadily declined over the last few decades as synthetic materials replace raw materials.

The Vietnam war itself is inexplicable in economic terms. American imports from the whole of Indochina were $11 million in 1950; why spend more than a thousand times that sum to dominate a country in which there were virtually no American investments? Capitalist business is not run that way. Even Sidney Lens reluctantly reaches the conclusion that "tin and tungsten could not justify the enormous commitment Johnson was making." The real reason for pursuing the war, he continues, was that "the future of the whole Capitalist System was at stake." On the basis of such reasoning it is possible to prove anything; whenever the economic interests which allegedly shaped American foreign policy cannot be identified, one simply asserts that the future of the whole system is at stake. The truth is closer to Ronald Steel's observation: "We have not exploited our empire; our empire has exploited us."**

The economic prosperity of the United States and the other leading industrial countries simply does not depend on the Third World; if it did, one might be more optimistic about the economic future of the underdeveloped countries. Nor is it true that big business has a vested interest in the armaments race (although it is of course true that the interests of *certain* big enterprises are involved). It really ought to be common knowledge by now that the greatest economic advances of the last two decades were made by Japan, West Germany, and Italy, the very countries in which defense spending was low, or, in the case of Japan, virtually nonexistent. There is no reason to believe the American GNP could not handily survive a drastic reduction in defense spending, and go on to new heights of productivity.

NEO-ISOLATIONISTS are fond of saying that a condition of symmetry now exists as between the United States and the Soviet Union, and that the latter has effectively renounced any plans it may have once had for world revolution.†† According to Senator J. William Fulbright, for example, reconciliation between East and West is primarily a psychological problem now; the building of economic and cultural bridges should help bring about the reunification of Europe and the eventual removal of the last remaining ideological barriers.‡

*Sidney Lens, *The Forging of the American Empire* (Crowell).

† Harry Magdoff, *Age of Imperialism* (Monthly Review Press); Gabriel Kolko, *The Politics of War* (Random House). See also Richard J. Barnet, *The Roots of War* (Random House).

** *Pax Americana* (Viking).

†† On the issue of "symmetry," see my "The World of the 70's" in the August COMMENTARY.

‡ *The Arrogance of Power* (Random House).

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Similar opinions, phrased a bit more cautiously, have been expressed in the writings of other experts on international affairs, all tending toward the judgment that the Soviet Union is genuinely interested in peaceful coexistence, that it is in any case too weak to pursue a more aggressive policy even if it wanted to, and that the U.S. should respond accordingly. Thus, Ronald Steel has reached the conclusion that the "Communist world does not exist any more," while Edmund Stillman and William Pfaff see a "catastrophic decline in Soviet foreign influence and prestige," and Hans J. Morgenthau maintains that the Communist world is being transformed into a pluralistic universe.*

None of these descriptions fits the reality. There has been no decline in Soviet foreign influence and prestige, and no liberalization in Eastern Europe; the Soviet Union has so far not become a status-quo power and the Communist "pluralistic universe" is largely a myth. On the contrary, the Soviet Union has reestablished its authority over most Communist parties in the world; even Yugoslavia and Rumania have once again drawn closer to Moscow. China has been on the whole rather successfully contained. There has been a setback in Egypt but it may not be a lasting one. Once the dust settles in Cairo we may find the Russians still there but Sadat not. Anyway, Moscow now has a base in Iraq, and the Persian Gulf, everything considered, is more important to it than the Sinai desert. I. F. Stone may assert that the Russians, softened up by President Nixon, have been persuaded to become America's junior partner, but his thesis is unlikely to win converts in Europe or the Middle East, in Southeast Asia or the Far East—anywhere, in effect, outside Washington and New York. On a more serious level, George F. Kennan recently announced that "world revolution has simply faded out of the picture as a concrete aim of Soviet foreign policy"; if it weren't for the dangerous nuclear and naval rivalry, Mr. Kennan continued, the outside world and particularly the United States would have little more to fear from Russia than they did in 1910. Soviet leaders are insecure at home because they are dimly conscious, as was the Czarist regime seventy years ago, that they have lost the confidence of their own intellectuals and they don't know how to recover it.†

Whether Soviet intellectuals today put more or less confidence in their leaders than they did fifteen or thirty years ago is a moot point. But what does it matter? The impact of the disaffected intelligentsia on politics is in any case hardly as weighty in the Soviet Union as it is in the U.S. The fact, moreover, that world revolution has not been a concrete aim of Soviet foreign policy for several decades should have been clear to Mr. Kennan as far back as 1947 when he wrote his famous "Mr. X" article for *Foreign Affairs*. Soviet global ambitions are not, and perhaps never were, unlimited, and the ideological impulse in Soviet foreign policy has been steadily diminishing at least since World War II. This process will in all probability continue in the years to come if it is clear that a further expansion of the Soviet sphere of influence would involve unacceptable risks. By the same token, the trend could be halted or even reversed if American foreign policy turns decisively and permanently to neo-isolationism. Responsible neo-isolationists are aware of the conceptual dilemma they face in this connection: on the one hand they recommend that Washington shun all military alliances, on the other they admit that a *Pax Sovietica* would be a universal disaster. The obvious, indeed the only, way out of this dilemma is to exaggerate the difficulties facing the Soviet leaders on the domestic front and to suggest that any attempt on their part to expand their sphere of influence would do them more harm than good. Messrs. Brezhnev and Kosygin may be grateful for the solicitude but will go ahead as they see fit.

THE Moscow summit this year has given birth to a joint declaration affirming twelve common principles as admirable as the United Nations Charter, and as vague; each side will interpret them in a different way. America, the status-quo power, assumes that the world scene will remain more or less as it now is for many years to come. The Soviet Union, on the other hand, assumes that there is nothing in the agreements that precludes squeezing America out of Europe and the Mediterranean and assisting takeovers by pro-Soviet forces in various parts of the world. On this reckoning new conflicts are bound to arise sooner or later. Certain rules of the game have been established, but the Soviet Union has never made a secret of its intention to alter them if the balance of power should tilt in its favor.

No doubt prospects must appear favorable to the Russians. As an American advocate of disinvolvement has remarked of the current U.S. mood: "The Vietnam war has triggered off a profound revulsion against involvement in all foreign quarrels. . . . The American people have been cynically, even cruelly used by political leaders who have squandered their wealth and stolen the lives of their children to fight imperial wars."** In this respect, as in many others, there is not the faintest symmetry between the United States and the Soviet Union. There may be grum-

* *Pax Americana, op. cit.;* Edmund Stillman and William Pfaff, *Power and Impotence* (Random House); Hans J. Morgenthau, *A New Foreign Policy for the U.S.* (Praeger).

† *Washington Post,* May 28, 1972, quoting *Foreign Policy,* Summer 1972.

** Ronald Steel, "A Spheres of Influence Policy," *Foreign Policy,* Winter 1971/2.

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bling in Russia about the money squandered on Cuba and Egypt (money which the Russians can afford even less than the Americans), and a few intellectuals may have pangs of conscience over Czechoslovakia, but the chances that a non-interventionist mood will affect a sizable section of Soviet society, and become a political force, are virtually nil.

WHAT would the neo-isolationists have America do? The question is answered with some directness in Robert W. Tucker's *A New Isolationism,** the most closely reasoned case for this policy yet to appear. Mr. Tucker argues that alliances cannot enhance American security; on the contrary, all alliances have become a liability. The Soviet Union could gain full control of Western Europe, he maintains, and the threat to America's physical security would not be markedly greater than it is today. Not even the emplacement of Soviet missiles in Cuba would pose more of a menace than the one already represented by Soviet Polaris-type submarines. True, America has substantial interests abroad, but these in his view would not necessarily be jeopardized by a military withdrawal. As for the danger of nuclear proliferation, even if Japan and West Germany had nuclear arms, they would still be constrained to behave moderately because they are themselves so vulnerable. The same applies, *a fortiori*, to smaller countries.

In contrast to most other isolationists, Professor Tucker has few illusions about the consequences of an American retreat; he does not deny that if American influence is reduced Soviet influence in Western Europe and other parts of the world will increase, and he rejects as naive the assumption that by retreating from global politics America may somehow command a strong position of moral leadership, or bring about a striking improvement in the quality of its domestic life. But he favors such a retreat anyway.

Mr. Tucker's realism is refreshing after the massive doses of wishful thinking contained in the writings of most other isolationists. Nevertheless, there is a striking disparity between his radical analysis and his on the whole rather moderate conclusions. Why propose, as he finally does, only a relatively small reduction in America's defense burden? Why not take more extreme action? Surely there is no reason to assume that either the Russians or the Chinese are considering an invasion of the U.S., so why not dismantle the entire "imperial" bureaucracy, along with the industrial superstructure of the "warfare state"? Mr. Tucker is absolutely right in maintaining that an isolated America is economically and politically viable. He is also right in believing that the price in reduced American influence to be paid for isolationism would be very high indeed, which is why he follows his sweeping and radical critique with half-hearted proposals for a modest reduction in defense spending.

The difficulty in my opinion lies in a fundamentally imbalanced conception of the world situation. In the final analysis Mr. Tucker's ideas, like those of other neo-isolationists, rest, as he puts it, "upon a view of the world in which the great powers are increasingly constrained in their behavior, whether toward each other or toward small powers." This may be correct with regard to post-Vietnam America; it is incorrect as far as the Soviet Union is concerned.

Neo-isolationist optimism seems unwarranted in other respects as well. One of the consequences of American disengagement would be nuclear proliferation, admits David Calleo, who, however, envisages a "selective expansion of the nuclear club."† But it is hardly clear that the expansion would be selective, or that the policy he advocates would result in the formation of a club and not in nuclear war. (Few observers of the Asian scene doubt that India and Pakistan would have used atomic bombs long ago if they had had them.)

In the new world order, as the neo-isolationists see it, the responsibility for dealing with intractable problems will be transferred to the United Nations. Alternatively, we are referred to the emergence of a "multi-polar system" as a cure for contemporary ills. As a last resort certain concepts from the past have also been disinterred. Ronald Steel (following Walter Lippmann) has praised the advantages of a "mature spheres-of-influence" policy;** David Calleo, evidently preferring more remote history, has invoked the positive lessons to be drawn from the Holy Roman Empire. (With equal or greater justice one could point to the Hapsburg and Ottoman empires.) A spheres-of-influence policy *has* worked during certain periods of history, and it might work today—but only as among status-quo powers. The trouble is, to repeat, that the Soviet Union is not yet a status-quo power.

IF there is little reason to suppose that neo-isolationism will make for a more peaceful world, there is even less reason to suppose that turning away from foreign affairs will make it any easier for the United States to tackle its domestic problems: the urban crisis, the unsolved social and racial questions, the alienation of wide sections of American society. A confident, dynamic country can play an active part in world affairs and at the same time cope with its internal problems. A people adrift, lacking purpose and conviction, cannot do either; defeatism is an affliction which cannot be compartmentalized.

What of a reallocation of financial resources? Economists have noted an apparent paradox:

*Universe Books, 127 pp., $6.00.
† *The Atlantic Fantasy* (Johns Hopkins).
** "A Spheres of Influence Policy," *op. cit.*

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during the last year of World War II more than 35 per cent of the American GNP was spent on defense, a proportion about five times as high as at present. Yet the progress of the war did not inhibit social change and the average American was not notably worse off that year than he was five years previously or subsequently. This, needless to say, is not an argument for war as a remedy for social ills. But it should serve as a reminder that the domestic effects of "interventionism" are not all, and not always, debilitating; the assumption is simply unwarranted that but for "globalism" the cities would be habitable, poverty would be stamped out, and the disaffected reintegrated into society. Dollar transfusions—even on the debatable assumption that they can be made available—cannot restore lost confidence and optimism, nor can a sudden diversion of attention to the ecological condition of the country. The only certain result of a greening-of-America policy, to paraphrase the British economist Peter Wiles, would be the emergence of Russia as the dominant power in Europe and some other parts of the world. The rest is wishful thinking.

NEO-ISOLATIONISM is a mansion with many rooms; its advocates range from the sensible to the lunatic. No critique of neo-isolationism can ignore the grave mistakes in American foreign policy which gave rise to the present crisis, and thus to the climate in which neo-isolationism flourishes. But accepting the limitations of American power is not the same as surrendering the exercise of power altogether. One may hope that the price America and the world are bound to pay for the political education of the neo-isolationists will not be too steep, or the damage irreparable.

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"Serrano" vs. the People

Chester E. Finn, Jr. and Leslie Lenkowsky

LAST year the California Supreme Court handed down a decision in the case of *Serrano* v. *Priest* that condemned the entire structure of public education in the nation's most populous state. Represented by attorneys from poverty-law agencies and universities, the plaintiffs got a judgment that found the California school-finance system unconstitutional on the grounds that it deprived their children of "equal educational opportunity" and, consequently, of their fundamental right to success and happiness. Concluding that the existing system tied the resources reserved for education to each community's wealth, the court proclaimed a new rule of "fiscal neutrality" according to which the state must not allow the level of spending for public schools to be "a function of wealth other than the wealth of the state as a whole." California accordingly faces the prospect of devising a new system of school finance that would distribute the burden of paying for public schools equally throughout the state.

Courts in Minnesota, Texas, and New Jersey have already used *Serrano* as precedent for analogous decisions, and similar cases are in the works elsewhere. Other states are readying legislation to conform to kindred judgments when they come. New York's Fleischmann Commission has urged a statewide property tax for education, and President Nixon's Commission on School Finance declared itself in favor of full state assumption of all school costs. But the most significant event in this burgeoning reform movement will come in October when the United States Supreme Court reviews the Texas case, *Rodriguez* v. *San Antonio*.

If the lower court's ruling in *Rodriguez* is upheld, the judgment will mandate a complete restructuring of the system by which most states pay for their public schools. Yet if the purpose of this vast reconstruction is to make the schools a "bright hope for entry of the poor and oppressed into the mainstream of American society," as the California Supreme Court declared, it will fail. For such a restructuring will do little to improve the education of the poor. What it will do, however, is put more money into the pockets of the largest group of college-educated, state-certified, middle-class professionals in the land—money that will likely come in large part from the pockets of those less well-off. And it will also put more money into suburban and rural schools while putting no more into the schools of the central cities, and perhaps even less.

THE assumptions underlying the new line of cases on school finance are not themselves new. They have their roots in a concern first expressed around the turn of the century by Ellwood Cubberley, known to generations of educators as "the father of school finance." As a corollary of the "local school committee" tradition of educational governance dating back to pre-Revolutionary New England, American public schools were financed mostly through local property taxes. Such revenues had two outstanding characteristics: they depended heavily on the wealth of the city or town, and they were highly susceptible to community wishes. For a property tax was the product of two numbers: the *value* of a piece of property, times the *rate* at which the local authority chose to tax it. It followed that several kinds of inequalities could arise. A district might lack the motivation to levy a tax rate on its property that would raise revenues sufficient to match those of neighboring districts; or it might raise ample funds with its property tax, but use them for services other than schooling—welfare, police, sewers, etc. Yet another district might lack the intrinsic wealth of the adjoining town; hence an equal tax rate would yield unequal revenues, and even a higher rate might still leave the schools seemingly shortchanged by the public treasury. Thus, said Cubberley, some districts could provide a "minimum of good instruction" with relative ease, while for others it was a hardship. The state government should equalize these burdens since they were borne for the common good, and should do so through a state school tax.

In response to such suggestions, the state share of school costs grew steadily and was eventually supplemented by federal aid as well. (About three-fifths of the total elementary- and secondary-

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school budget now comes from sources other than local property taxes.) Concomitantly, Cubberley's notion of a "minimum of good instruction" in every district was expanded into the idea of "equal educational opportunity" for all—by which was meant the provision of so many classrooms, so many teachers, and so many textbooks per so many pupils, whatever the variations in the taxable wealth of their parents or of the districts in which they lived.

What *Serrano, Rodriguez,* and the other cases in the same line imply is that this objective remains to be achieved. The plaintiffs in *Serrano,* for example, alleged—and the California court agreed—that "substantial disparities in the quality and extent of availability of educational opportunities exist and are perpetuated among the several school districts of the State. . . . The educational opportunities made available to children attending public schools in the districts, including plaintiff children, are substantially inferior to the educational opportunities made available to children attending public schools in many other districts of the State." A New Jersey court, in *Robinson* v. *Cahill,* went further, enumerating in some detail the educational facilities *not* available to students in poorer districts as a result of the inequitable state-finance system. Teacher qualifications, age of school buildings, and physical condition of textbooks were all cited. The court concluded: "The present equalizing factors in the law are not sufficient to overcome inequities in the distribution of school funds and tax burdens."

IN PURSUING this approach, the new reformers have adopted a venerable and, in its time, honorable idea, but it is one whose time has passed. Fifty years ago, it was justifiable to assume that "equality of educational opportunity" could be translated into a relatively simple calculation based on money. There was no evidence to the contrary. The early reformers had no reason not to take for granted that schooling would benefit from more of the things that money could buy—more highly trained teachers, larger school plants, bigger libraries, etc. Today, however, no such clarity prevails. For one thing, we now have enough evidence to show that the kinds of expenditures to which *Serrano* and the other cases point have very little bearing on what and how much the children actually learn; and for another thing, we have in the past ten years developed a new understanding of equal educational opportunity. In his message to Congress on educational reform in March 1970, President Nixon enunciated this new standard:

> What makes a "good" school? The old answer was a school that maintained high standards of plant and equipment; that had a reasonable number of children per classroom; whose teachers had good college and often graduate training; a school that kept up to date with new curriculum developments, and was alert to new techniques in instruction. . . . [Now] apart from the general public interest in providing teachers an honorable and well-paid professional career, there is only one important question to be asked about education: *What do the children learn?*

This notion that the *results* of education will henceforth preoccupy those seeking equal educational opportunity was, in part, the inevitable consequence of earlier success in equalizing *services.* As Frederick Mosteller and Daniel P. Moynihan have recently written: "[By] 1966 the nation had come much closer to achieving [the] classical notion of equality of educational opportunity than most of us realized then or realize now." But the new focus on results also emerged out of a growing perception that the ambitious "compensatory" programs of the 60's had, by and large, failed. A galaxy of special educational activities with names like Headstart, Title I, and Upward Bound began with federal funds in a brave effort to equalize the educational opportunities of disadvantaged youngsters by "compensating" through extra services for the shortages in their homes and cognitive experiences. However, participation in such programs seemed to close little of the "achievement gap" between lower-class and middle-class children. The reason was suggested by the most surprising of the many surprising findings of the Coleman report: that the variation among schools in academic achievement could be attributed in no significant degree to differences among them in "inputs" like facilities, teachers, and curriculum.

Though sharply criticized after its appearance in 1966, the conclusions of this nationwide federal survey have been supported by subsequent research. Christopher Jencks, a major contributor to the most thorough reevaluation of the Coleman study,* found, for example, that "When schools with economically and racially similar students were compared, differences in school policies and resources were rarely associated with pedagogically significant or statistically reliable differences in verbal achievement." Others knowledgeable in the complexities of this type of input-output analysis would go further. A survey done by the RAND Corporation for the President's Commission on School Finance concluded: "There seem to be opportunities for significant redirections and in some cases reductions in educational expenditures without deterioration in educational outcomes."

The point is not that schools make *no* difference. Mosteller and Moynihan comment sharply: "Chil-

*Papers by Jencks and others are contained in Frederick Mosteller and Daniel P. Moynihan, eds., *On Equality of Educational Opportunity, Papers Deriving from the Harvard University Faculty Seminar on the Coleman Report,* Random House, 546 pp., $15.00.

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dren don't think up algebra on their own. . . . But given that schools have reached their present levels of equality, the observed variation [in resources] was reported . . . to have little effect on school achievement." Thus none of the major studies, nor any of the handful of social scientists who fully comprehend their statistical intricacies, offers reason to expect that changing the way our schools are financed will have more than a trivial effect on what children learn in them.

Actually the Supreme Court under Earl Warren faced up to this issue in March 1969 when it affirmed the judgment of *McInnis* v. *Shapiro* in which an Illinois court had rejected the claim of a group of Chicago students that the state's school finance laws "violate their Fourteenth Amendment rights to equal protection and due process because they permit wide variations in the expenditures per student from district to district, thereby providing some students with a good education and depriving others, who have equal or greater educational needs." The problem for the lower court was the absence of "discoverable and manageable standards" by which to determine whether the Constitution had been violated:

> The only possible standard is the rigid assumption that each pupil must receive the same dollar expenditures. Expenses are not, however, the exclusive yardstick of a child's educational needs. . . . As new teaching methods are devised and as urban growth demands changed patterns of instruction, the only realistic way the State can adjust is through legislative study, discussion, and continuing revision of the controlling statutes. Even if there were some guidelines available to the judiciary, the courts simply cannot provide the empirical research and consultation necessary for intelligent educational planning.

The court cited Justice Holmes: "The 14th Amendment is not a pedogogical requirement of the impracticable."

The judges in the recent cases contend that *McInnis* is not a controlling precedent, and in this they are technically correct. For the strategy of the lawyers in these later suits has been to sidestep the legal complications that would arise if "educational need" or some other output-based criterion were used. Instead they have sought equal educational opportunity through the back door of fiscal equity. Such a standard, though only the narrowest of legalisms separates it from *McInnis,* is apparently persuasive to judges, however far removed it may be from the realities of educational reform.

Aside from the effects on fifty million students, also at stake in the *Serrano* litigation is the question of who will benefit from a large and growing sector of the economy. Next year, the nation's elementary- and secondary-school budget will approach 50 billion dollars, some 5 per cent of a trillion-dollar Gross National Product. (With the costs of private and higher education included, expenditures on schools turn out to be slightly larger than the defense budget and are rivaled only by health care among services involving large outlays of public funds.) Nor is there much reason to expect that this is an upper limit. With no growth in enrollments expected until at least 1980, per-pupil expenditures are bound to keep climbing, and the average will surely pass $1,000 by the end of the decade.

While some of the new reformers believe that the recent cases bear only on the equalization of *revenues* and not on their level, the more likely result will be a large net increase in educational *spending.* The mere shift of financing away from the local district, with its regular bond and budget referenda, may be expected to loosen the purse-strings, and removing the disadvantage of penury from the poorer districts would also free these districts to purchase more resources for their schools. Moreover, as Moynihan noted in a recent issue of the University of Illinois *Law Forum*: "To the degree that you insist on equal levels of expenditure, there is nothing in the political process as practiced in this country that suggests government will be able to push some people down; instead what you do is push other people up, which will make the level of expenditure higher." In New York, for example, adoption of a *Serrano*-like plan would, according to a consultant to the Fleischmann Commission, cost the state at least another $600 million annually.

Of these new funds, 60 per cent or more will be absorbed either by the hiring of additional teachers or by increases in teacher salaries. Teachers already claim about two-thirds of all school expenditures, and given their growing strength as a unionized group, they are unlikely to settle for a significantly lesser share in the years to come. What this means is that the consequence of divorcing affluence from spending in the case of the schools will almost certainly be to favor the affluent. For today, most teachers are to be found among that half of the population with family incomes above $10,000 per year; with a median family income of nearly $13,000, many teachers earn more than at least two-thirds of their countrymen, and with the added probability that the teacher is a married woman, family income may easily exceed $15,000, putting them in the top fifth.

Teachers work hard, their struggle has been long, and they have earned everything they have achieved. Nevertheless, in the aftermath of *Serrano,* it is likely that the milkman will end up paying more so that his children's teacher can earn more—without much chance of seeing his children learn more. While this sequence would follow almost any general increase in educational spending, it is always ironic to find it as an outcome of a

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reform designed to aid low-income families. Yet, for the overall income-transfer effect of this reform to be anything but regressive, the taxes invoked would have to be very progressive indeed, and state taxes are not noted for possessing that quality.

If *Serrano*'s effect on the distribution of income is bound to be regressive, its effect on the distribution of funds among cities on the one hand and suburbs and rural areas on the other is likely to favor the latter. It may once have been true that the poor lived in discrete "pockets of poverty," but many low-income people now live in relatively affluent jurisdictions—central cities with enduring concentrations of factories, banks, and department stores, which make for overall wealth. For this reason *Serrano*, with its solicitude focused on poor school *districts*, could well result in the spending of less money on schooling for the children of the poor. Indeed, if California adopted one popular post-*Serrano* formula that is advocated by many of the new reformers it would bring a slight decline in per-pupil spending in Los Angeles, virtually no change in Oakland, and a hefty loss in San Francisco.

By contrast, the suburbs and the small rural school districts of the United States lack the cities' tax base and, although they are spared the fiscal drain of a large police force, rusty public transit, and soaring relief rolls, they have a higher proportion of public-school students in their populations—the product of young families and of a paucity of parochial schools. Thus while they may already spend a sizable portion of net revenues on education, their wealth-per-student is low enough to warrant aid under the *Serrano* rule. Using one possible post-*Serrano* formula, Joel Berke and John Callahan of Syracuse University have calculated that the central cities of the Northeast and Midwest would lose revenues *to* small towns and exurbs. They add that, in the South, "The tax impact . . . would permit the suburban counties . . . to reduce tax effort for education, while the cities would get either a lesser degree of tax relief or none at all."

A critic of the recent decisions need not defend the existing arrangements, for it is surely not fair that some districts must perennially struggle to make ends meet. But the overall economic impact of *Serrano* appears unlikely to be any simpler or more salutary than its effect on educational achievement. Professor Charles Benson, a longtime student of school finance who directed the studies of the Fleischmann Commission, cautions that "We must make distinctions among cities. Some are disadvantaged. Others are resting on their oars." Still others might have different priorities for public expenditures—preferring, for example, light taxes and modest school spending or wanting new public funds for purposes other than education. None of the courts, and only a few of the new reformers, have sought to make these distinctions. Perhaps they should not have been expected to, since that kind of choice is usually reserved for the political process and the legislature and is not generally thought to be the province of the courts.

IN SHORT, the new reformers have been acting on the basis of an extraordinary confidence both in the conventional wisdom of American education and in the political wisdom of American courts. The advocates of *Serrano* maintain that even though we are not yet able to specify the linkage between the resources that go into a school and the "learning" that comes out, there must be *some* relationship. Thus the Minnesota court in *Van Dusartz* v. *Hatfield*:

> While the correlation between expenditure per pupil and the quality of education may be open to argument, the Court must assume it is high. To do otherwise would be to hold that in those wealthy districts where the per-pupil expenditure is higher than some real or imaginary norm, the school boards are merely wasting the taxpayers' money.

There is an element of wistfulness in this posture. The findings of educational research have grown incomprehensible and alien. Judges and lawyers have *known* that better schools produce better students since their own days in the classrooms of Newton and New Trier. They do not doubt that more schooling improves an individual's status. Moreover, they believe schools are the great equalizers; what Justice Sullivan in *Serrano* called the cherished idea of American education—"free public schools [that] shall make available to all children equally the abundant gifts of learning"—is seen as the very essence of social mobility, the grand eraser of the distinguishing marks of birth.

These beliefs are so central to American thought that people who normally take some pride in staying abreast of recent scholarship cannot quite accept the validity of studies throwing them into question. And so the conventional wisdom persists. Yet the conventional wisdom is wrong. Schools do not compensate very well for differences among groups of children, and probably never can. It is small consolation to know that schooling also turns out to be less important for one's chances in life than has generally been thought. A "good" education does not guarantee wealth any more than a "bad" one precludes it, and in neither case does formal schooling seem to have all that much to do with it.*

If, then, the pattern of expenditure now embraced by the courts is inappropriate to the task at hand, to persist with ever larger sums is a costly and misleading pursuit for society. Even if, as is unlikely, the *Serrano* rule were to put more

*See David K. Cohen, "Does IQ Matter?," COMMENTARY, April 1972.

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funds into the inner city, and even though the wise investment of additional resources in slum schools might well improve the *conditions* for students and teachers alike, the limits of our present knowledge are such that those extra dollars would add to actual *learning* only by coincidence or good fortune. A more promising route to improved educational results may not lie through the classroom at all. The Coleman analysis, for example, found a relatively strong relationship between social class and academic performance; perhaps it would be wiser to invest additional money in income-maintenance programs rather than in schools.

INSOFAR as we do spend on education, heroic experimentation is in order, both in schools and outside, rigorously monitored and carefully analyzed in the hope that one day our attempts at equal educational opportunity may be more than merely wishful. At a minimum, serious reform will call for reaching well beyond the school as we know it, for a willingness to reckon with unthinkables such as family structure and a child's choice of playmates, for public acceptance of social and racial integration, for more rigorous and skillful testing and measuring than have yet been seen, for new understanding of the social role of the school, and for a realistic approach to individual and group differences including, finally, acquiescence in the unloved statistical law that half must score below the median. That serious reform of this kind is more likely to be pursued through the executive and legislative branches than through the courts is suggested by the recent establishment of the National Institute of Education, proposed by the President and enacted by Congress to undertake the careful research and experimentation that should one day make sure a child learns to read even if his family is poor.

The reformers behind *Serrano* have charted a far less ambitious course, as unheroic as it is familiar. They have picked a simple financial solution to a difficult non-financial problem, seemingly in the hope that throwing more money at it will make it go away, and they have asked judges to resolve economic, social, and educational questions of uncommon complexity. In thus seeking court rulings that, of necessity, deal only with crude measures of educational "inputs," like pupil-teacher ratios, and with equally rough fiscal indices, like school tax and expenditure levels, the new reformers distract us from the task at hand and, ironically, only reinforce the educational status quo.

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On "The Sorrow and the Pity"

Stanley Hoffmann

MARCEL OPHULS's four-and-a half-hour documentary film about France under the Nazi occupation, *The Sorrow and the Pity*, was originally made for television, but it has never been shown on French television. Mainly the reason is that this film poses a mighty and devastating challenge to the official version of the French experience in World War II: the myth of the French as massively enrolled in, or at least standing behind, the Resistance, with the exception of a handful of collaborationists and of a small clique of reactionaries centered in an illegal and illegitimate Vichy regime. This myth has become hallowed with time, and its strength and resilience certainly invite rebuttal. Nevertheless, two excesses do not make one truth, and there is a danger that foreign audiences especially will accept *The Sorrow and the Pity* as not only the real truth about Vichy, but the whole truth as well.

That it is the "real" truth cannot be questioned. It is easy to use a movie camera for lies—propaganda films sometimes do so brilliantly. But there are no lies here. Ophuls has stated that his intention was to show the discrepancy between present testimonies and past reality, the distortions of memory and the soothing role of oblivion for many souls who need to find peace. This he has done superbly—for instance, when he asks Marius Klein, the shopkeeper, about his advertisement denying that he was Jewish; or when he interviews two ancient high-school teachers who do not seem capable of bringing their past back to life, or when d'Astier—aristocrat, former Resistance leader, former fellow-traveler of the Communists, and finally a Gaullist—repudiates, on the eve of his death, the demand he had made in 1944 for drastic purges; or when every German who appears in the film denies responsibility for atrocities or arrests which, invariably, were another service's responsibility.

But Ophuls does much more than record lapses, denials, and inconsistencies. He shows how diversely the passage of time affects different people. He records the bitter and vivid memories of some —the two humane, quietly heroic, and so movingly matter-of-fact old peasants, the brothers Grave, who say that their feats as members of the Resistance gave them a bad reputation; the successful businessman who used to be Colonel Gaspar in the Resistance, and who now drives a German Mercedes but who remains haunted by the events of those years, upset by the false claims of "the Resistants of the last hour," and contemptuous of those who took no risks then but now lie to themselves. De la Mazière, the former fascist, is still smarting from Pétain's refusal to see him; as for his revolutionary "past" (he quite perceptively remarks that for the son of a traditional French counterrevolutionary officer to become a fascist was a form of *contestation*—just as it is today for the son of a Communist to become a *Gauchiste*), it has left him skeptical of ideologies and fearful of commitments. And there is, of course, that unforgettable character out of a Mauriac novel or a Clouzot movie: the hairdresser, Mme. Solange, arrested, tortured, and jailed after the Liberation on what she considers to be a trumped-up charge cooked up by a close friend who imitated her handwriting in an act of vengeance aimed both at her own husband and at Mme. Solange. Whether *her* story is true, we will never know, but about her own sufferings, and her resentments, and her firm and typical "apolitical" love for Pétain, her hands, her voice, her face, her words allow us no doubts.

Ophuls also shows men who have not changed at all, and regret nothing: on the one hand, former Captain Tausend, still proud of German victories, cheerfully self-righteous and convinced that Alsace is German, or that other ex-soldier of the Third Reich who still resents his capture by the Maquis; on the other hand, Pierre Mendès-France, as incisive, tough-minded, devoid of illusions or cant, articulate, combative, ironic, and proud today as when he was being hounded as a Jew and tried on a fake charge of desertion. If M. Verdier, the pharmacist who is in a way the movie's anti-hero, has changed at all, it is only insofar as he has become a rather opulent bourgeois, as he smugly admits; his feelings haven't changed in the least.

TRUTHFUL when he shows us what time has done to his characters, Ophuls is also right when he tells us what went on in the war years. The thread is provided by two figures. One is the invariably ebullient, bouncy, and mindlessly optimistic Maurice Chevalier, singing his silly little patriotic ditties during the phony war, then under Pétain, then after the Liberation. He symbolizes both the average guy's resilience and talent for passing through all regimes, and the

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breezy mediocrity and shallow self-satisfaction that survive all ordeals. (It must be said, however, that there was much more to Chevalier than this; if Ophuls's use of his songs and dances is a perfectly fair statement of a theme, it is unfair to the man, however much on target so far as his audiences are concerned.)

The other figure is the pharmacist, M. Verdier, who reveals himself as the perfect *Francais moyen* of those years: all events are reduced to him—at best, to him and his family. He let, as he put it, the front come to him; the defeat, to him, was like losing a rugby match; eating and prudence were his mottoes—out of fear of starvation he overfed his son born in 1942! The big event of 1943, for him, was the resumption of hunting. A monster, a scoundrel? Assuredly not. His horizon may be low, his sense of solidarity weak, his display of that form of individualism Tocqueville had prophesied—and detested—may be annoying, but the other side of the coin is a kind of soft humanity: he had refused to kill a German soldier whom he could have shot, he helped two Jewish girls, his powers of sympathy are genuine enough. But indignation and rebellion are not his forte: the only reaction one could have to the deportations of Jews, he says, was tears—hidden tears: in one's cellar.

Other characters are revealed as even more mediocre: the hotel keeper at Royat, whose bad memories of the Germans who took over his hotel are limited to the fact that he did not get paid, and to the night when German soldiers tried to bring girls up to their rooms; the bicycle champion who saw no Germans in a city which was not merely occupied, after November 1942, but the scene of violent disturbances. If the movie so often seems a prosecutor's brief, it is not because of the interviewers' questions; it is because of the answers they get.

WHAT is, ultimately, frightening about *The Sorrow and the Pity*, is what it reveals to some, and recalls to others, about the climate of quasi-civil war and Nazi occupation. It is Verdier who, characteristically, talks about sorrow and pity: soft feelings again. What seeps from the screen is contempt, hatred, and fear. D'Astier, in 1969, explains his bloodthirstiness of 1944 by the fact that throughout the war years he had lived in fear. It is fear which the two high-school teachers remember, amid the ruins of their memory, as the main reason that repression and arrests went unchallenged by their colleagues. It is fear which Dennis Rake, the British agent who lived in hiding in Vichy France, sees as the reason for the bourgeois' caution and cowardice.

As for hatred, it is the kind of hatred which, as Mendès-France reports, inspired the followers of Pétain and Laval in their campaign against the parliamentarians who had sailed on the *Massilia* in order to keep fighting, and in their attacks on the Socialist leader of the Popular Front, Léon Blum, whom they blamed, absurdly, for France's fall—because the Popular Front had scared them. It is hatred which that almost cartoonlike figure, the monarchist Resistance leader, Colonel du Jonchay, still feels toward Communists, and toward Mendès. It is hatred which bloated Vichy's anti-Semitism, and the fascism of young men like de la Mazière, raised on a diet of anti-liberalism, anti-Communism, and disgust for foreigners and Jews. It is hatred which led to the Vichy militia's abominations. It is hatred as well as envy and pettiness disguised as patriotic duty which turned poison-pen letters into an industry. It is hatred and a passion for hasty vengeance which swelled the inevitable wave of summary executions in the weeks that preceded and followed the Liberation.

And as for contempt, the movie is steeped in it: the contempt which we, as spectators, cannot help feeling toward some of the characters on the screen; the contempt which the former German occupiers obviously still have for the French who served them—on the black market or in bed—or who came asking for services, such as the right to hold horse races; the sardonic contempt, barely curbed by pity and empathy, which old General Spears, Churchill's adviser and de Gaulle's friend turned foe, suggests toward a nation that let England down and turns to military saviors even in defeat; the contempt of de la Mazière for the glittering nights of occupied Paris—but also for the drab soldiers of France compared to the healthy torsos of the Nazis; the contempt of Mendès (and of his lawyer) for the men who tried and jailed him. Whoever has not lived through such a period will get its poisons into his bloodstream while watching *The Sorrow and the Pity*.

And there is yet another truth that emerges here: a truth about what cemented each camp. The men of Vichy were those for whom order was the highest good. War was chaos and a permanent threat of subversion; only an authoritarian and reactionary regime could restore and consolidate "society," undermined by democracy and labor unions and "excessive" freedoms and "foreign" miasmas. On the other side were all those for whom freedom came first, whether it was the lay, republican, humanitarian ideal of freedom the brothers Grave had absorbed in their socialist milieu and in the Republic's public schools, or the somewhat less liberal, more narrowly patriotic instinct of freedom from foreign invaders which seems to have animated Colonel Gaspar.

That secondary truth—the diversity of each camp—is also brought home by the film. Lamirand, the amiable and gullible engineer who tried in vain to convert French youth to the cult of Pétain, and de la Mazière hardly seem to belong to the same world. D'Astier, the eccentric aristocrat who describes himself as the black sheep of his family, and who, after years of Communist fellow-traveling, died a left-wing Gaullist, proclaims—autobiographically—that only "ill-adjusted" people were ripe for the risks of the Resistance; but the brothers Grave, so much in harmony with their hills and their land and their farm, were obviously well-adjusted men, who decided that what they had was worth fighting and dying for.

Finally, what is true, even if it hurts, is the portrait of people who, submitted to a barrage of propaganda and later to a deluge of bombs, fearful of famine and reprisals, caught between armies

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and police forces, uncertain of the future, afraid of the disastrous effects of any commitment, find whatever security is still available only by locking the doors of their homes and hearts, cling to their daily tasks, try to remain unnoticed, and pray for survival. Self-preservation is not the noblest of aims, but it is the most elementary. In the torn country of 1944, with all communications cut, battles raging, rumors on the rampage, executions and ambushes everywhere, each man, each family, each village or town tended to become a little sovereign island again. That this did not prevent an extraordinary revival of community and an explosion of national enthusiasm became clear at the Liberation—about which we see very little, and whose excesses only are mentioned.

INDEED, if nothing here is false, it is not the whole truth which we see. Foreigners should beware of judging wartime France on the basis of this movie alone. *The Sorrow and the Pity* lasts four-and-a-half hours: it is much too short a time for a fair sketch of France in those years. I wish Ophuls could have made a movie twice or three times as long, or a series. Whole chunks of history are missing. The complex, slow way in which public opinion woke up from its escapist dream of archaic reaction and sheltered neutrality, realized that its love affair with Pétain rested on delusions, and gradually recoiled from the harsh realities of oppression and collaboration, is not well shown here. The spectator remains under the impression that the parties, salons, theaters, and collaborationist movie stars of occupied Paris remained representative of French slackness or corruption throughout the period; this is not at all the case.

The Resistance was, of course, not the subject matter of the movie. Even so, it could have been less arbitrarily presented. The movie focuses on Clermont-Ferrand, the capital of Auvergne; but it neither reports the Resistance activities of the faculty and students from the University of Strasbourg, in exile in Clermont—which led to massive Nazi repression—nor dwells on those of the big Michelin rubber factory, in which management as well as workers took part (one person merely mentions the arrest of Mme. Michelin). While the statement, so often made since 1945 and echoed here by Dennis Rake, according to which the "people," and especially the workers, joined the Resistance but the bourgeois did not, has some truth in it, it is much truer of the industrial and commercial bourgeoisie (with important exceptions, as in Clermont-Ferrand) than of the bourgeoisie of the professions. But one would not know it from this film. Nor is much said about a group whose impact was enormous, in days when the printed and the spoken word had such resonance: the intelligentsia. One rather crazy pro-Nazi novelist, Chateaubriant, is shown; why not, on the other side, Malraux or Vercors?

More seriously even, the diversity and complexity of French Resistance movements is barely suggested here. Why the Communist leader, Jacques Duclos, who had little to do with Clermont-Ferrand, appears on the screen is not clear. It was, of course, important that the Communist skills and sacrifices be evoked; but it would have been equally fair to stress the role of Christian Democrats and priests in the Resistance (the former head of the MRP, Georges Bidault, is interviewed, but talks of other things). Too much emphasis is put on Colonel du Jonchay, who manages to make the Resistance look pretty silly; and while there are moving scenes with ex-Colonel Gaspar, some of the spectators may have felt sorry that the true hero of the movie (along with Mendès), the marvelous old Grave, who knows who was responsible for his deportation but refuses to avenge himself, was a member of the British Intelligence Service, not of the French Resistance: a small point, perhaps, for foreign audiences today, a sore one for many Frenchmen, especially at a time when Vichy and the Nazis kept denouncing the rebels as a rabble manipulated by London and Moscow.

OMISSIONS bother me less, however, than what I would call a subtle distortion due to the process of selection. The whole truth is not here, not only because of what is left out altogether, but because of what is emphasized. Of course, the Resistance was not a mass movement—less than 250,000 "membership cards" were given out by the Veterans Administration after the war. But would it have been impossible for Ophuls to note how difficult it is to reach even that number in a largely petit-bourgeois country, in which most citizens do have something to lose—beyond their lives and freedoms—if they abandon their daily routine and throw themselves into the adventure of clandestinity? Of course Vichy's anti-Semitic legislation, and Laval's ghastly decisions about the Jews, bitterly recalled by Claude Levy, one of his young victims who survived to write eloquently about that sinister episode, represent hideous complicity with Nazism at its worst. But to say, as he does, that *France* was the only European country that collaborated, equates the Vichy regime and its police with France, and neglects all the Quislings and Oustachis elsewhere. Moreover, it leaves in the dark all those who helped Jews, foreign or French, to escape and survive.

To be sure, Rake and the British pilot downed over France, Evans, pay a tribute to the people who hid them. But—such is the power of the camera—what is said is less deeply convincing than what is shown, and so much of what is shown is grisly or shameful. The Resistance, small as it may have been, would not have had a chance of getting started and organized, and of surviving the highly efficient hounding of the Nazis and of their well-equipped French accomplices, if it hadn't had—especially in 1943-44—the support, active and passive, of millions of Frenchmen, who provided the Maquisards with false identity papers, food, clothing, shelter, and information. Some people—like de la Mazière—preserved their "innocence" and closed their eyes and ears when victims were rounded up and sent to camps and jails. But there were many more who knew, and did their best to save or help these victims. All of this may have been unspectacular; but it was impor-

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tant, in itself and for the record. One does not see much of it here. It is as if the right tune were being sung, but in the wrong key.

For Americans, who have never experienced sudden, total defeat and the almost overnight disappearance of their accustomed political elites; who have never lived under foreign occupation; who do not know what Nazi pressure meant; who have never had any apparently legal government, headed by a national hero and claiming total obedience, that sinks deeper and deeper into a morass of impotence, absurdity, and crime; who have never had to worry first and last about food and physical survival, the wise and gentle warning of Anthony Eden must be heeded: do not judge too harshly—especially if you keep in mind all that is not graphically recorded here, and if you remember that the movie you watch is both a revelation, and a weapon in a painful domestic battle of the French with their past.

II

The Sorrow and the Pity not only mirrors the French of the war years; like all works of art, it also reflects its author. I have never met Marcel Ophuls, but his movie helps me to know him. He came to France, as a child, when his German-Jewish parents fled Nazi Germany. Max Ophuls, his father, the famous director of *Liebelei, La Ronde, Lola Montes,* became a French citizen, like many refugees from Central Europe, and served in the French army when the war began. His son, like so many children of aliens, must have been caught in that French melting pot that is almost as effective as, and less publicized than, the American one. France's melting pot is her school system, her universalistic culture, the seductiveness of her intelligence and logic. Then came the catastrophe, and Vichy, with its statute discriminating against Jews in various professions—especially the movies—and its vendetta against naturalized refugees. The Ophuls family left for the United States in 1941. They did not return to France until 1950. Max Ophuls, unrecognized in Hollywood, once again found fame in France. Marcel became a movie director too.

This history, I think, explains a great deal. France is Marcel Ophuls's country: how well he knows her ways, her landscapes, the tone of people's conversations, the language of glances and gestures peculiar to her folk, the rhetoric of official propaganda, the atmosphere of her so often stifling provincial towns! But, obviously, his country deeply hurt him, as a child, in 1940. *The Sorrow and the Pity* is partly an exploration of the wound, partly the cry of a grieving convert—a child in flight from Nazi persecution, who had found new roots in France. As once uprooted people do, he had probably adopted France ever so passionately while she adopted him legally. He had probably fallen in love with the wisdom and poetry of French classics, the turmoil and intensity of French history, the ease and harmony of French daily life, the witty humaneness of the French *peuple*. Marcel Ophuls, growing older, must have found himself increasingly drawn back to those traumatic months of collapse, eerie revolution, sudden reversal of all values, and sudden fear; increasingly, he must have felt the need to come to grips with his own experience, and annoyance with French unwillingness to face the past, with official boastings, with the one-sidedness of the standard—the victors'—history. Both his resentment at the Germans who uprooted him a second time, and his grievances against the French who shattered his love affair, fill the screen. The subtle distortions I have mentioned are not accidental: they tell a story—his own.

How do I know this? By listening to the cool, sometimes insinuating, often cutting voice that interviews so many of the characters; and by listening to myself, whose personal history has many points in common with his own, except that I had come to France some years earlier, and not as a refugee, when I was a few months old, and that I remained in France throughout the war as a Frenchified Austrian—French by education and feeling, Austrian only by passport, a partly Jewish alien (my mother not having asked for naturalization in time), in a xenophobic anti-Semitic police state.

HENCE both my sympathy and my dissent. The first half of the movie—"The Collapse"—is almost unassailable: Marcel Ophuls was there, lived through this, and gives us the best account since the first half-hour of René Clément's *Forbidden Games*. This was indeed the feeling, of cowardly relief and collective brain concussion, the stunned flight from the war, the terrible blow—incomprehensible then, and, for many, even now—delivered by the British when they attacked the French fleet at Mers-el-Kébir, the search for peace and quiet and discipline—and scapegoats—under the grand old oak, Marshal Pétain, the clarion calls for atonement, the arrogant wails of self-flagellation, and the daily miseries of partial occupation and food shortages.

But Marcel Ophuls was not there later on: hence the weaknesses of the second half, "The Choice." He was not there when the "armies of the shadows" gathered in the woods, when Resistance networks defied the Gestapo and the Vichy militia and dropped their coded messages in the cities' mailboxes, when the morale of an exhausted and restless nation was suspended on the exhortations of a handful of spokesmen at the BBC and on the eloquence of writers whose real names were disguised at the bottom of ill-printed columns in clandestine newspapers and confidential pamphlets.

These were the days of hope and fervor, when even those who were not heroic began to live vicariously with the heroes in an atmosphere of passionate anticipation that makes anything in the postwar world seem drab or drained by comparison. This is where the Official Version is vindicated: the grand Gaullist metaphor of a nation that overcomes its initial weakness, daunts its demons, climbs the slope again, and makes the final victory partly its own, surely flatters the French too much by downplaying the doubts and divagations of the earlier period, or the opportunism and savagery

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that marred the climb. But it is, basically, not false.

Who did not live in a French town or village the weeks just before and after the Liberation does not know the bliss of being happy with and proud of those among whom one had come through. Much of what went on earlier could be forgiven—the little capitulations and the small acts of selfishness and meanness, if not the cruelties and calls for murder—because of the price paid, and of the slowly opening eyes, and of the *revanche* that was also a redemption, later on. If Maurice Chevalier tells one part of the story—the part I also remember so well, from the miserable radio of 1939 or 1941—surely Jean Moulin, the martyred leader of the Resistance, and Charles de Gaulle's inflexible genius tell the other part. Both parts are true; but since we all judge—maybe we shouldn't, but we can't help it—my own verdict is not at all as severe as Marcel Ophuls's.

On the scales of history, when it will at last be possible to weigh men, their acts, and their effects more fairly, the great things will be weightier than the mean ones. In Marcel Ophuls's movie, Verdier and the two almost senile schoolteachers remain a nagging, almost deafening counterpoint to the Graves, to Gaspar, and to Mendès. In my memory, the schoolteacher —now seventy-four and still vibrant —who taught me French history, gave me hope in the worst days, dried my tears when my best friend was deported along with his mother, and gave false papers to my mother and me so that we could flee a Gestapo-infested city in which the complicity of friends and neighbors was no longer a sufficient guarantee, this man wipes out all the bad moments, and the humiliations, and the terrors. He and his gentle wife were not Resistance heroes, but if there is an average Frenchman, it was this man who was representative of his nation; and for that, France and the French will always deserve our tribute, and have my love.

The Hitchcock Problem

William S. Pechter

With *Frenzy*, its director, Alfred Hitchcock, is said to have returned to form, but to what form has he returned? To a resounding orchestral accompaniment, so different from the anxiety-producing music with which Bernard Herrmann contributed so much to *Vertigo* and *Psycho*, we move from a panoramic view of the city of London to a Thames-side gathering at which a politician's speech about progress against the river's pollution is interrupted by the discovery of a floating corpse. It is a joke, typically Hitchcock, but typical of Hitchcock the jocose television-show host, rather than the film director who created things at once so funny and so disquieting as Robert Walker *en famille* in *Strangers on a Train*, or Anthony Perkins among those stuffed birds in *Psycho*. The corpse has been strangled with a necktie, the latest in a series of such murders, and in the following scene we are introduced to a desperate-looking man as he knots his necktie—a red herring, as it turns out, but a cheaply bought one, dependent as it is on our recognition of the link between the scenes as a cliché, and our anticipation of the next one. (The real red herring, in any case, is that, for all that's made of the villain being the "Necktie Murderer," nothing comes of this either in the way of the police solving the case or the film illuminating the mind of the killer.) And again, one thinks, how different from the way we are allowed to be misled by our own banal expectations in *Psycho*, so blinded by our preoccupation with some stolen money that we cannot see the point at which far more terrible matters come into play.

To that sinking feeling one experiences when an artist one admires actually ends up creating the kind of work his detractors have been wrongly attributing to him all along, *Frenzy* brings a new twist. For here is Hitchcock making the kind of film people have been claiming him once to have made so as to derogate his recent work by comparison with it, finally making that genteel British thriller with whose fictitious model so much of his later work has been hit over the head.

Here, then, is a generous serving of local color and quaintly British humor (in the depiction of the police, who seem fresh from chasing the Lavender Hill Mob), spiced with a few delectable murders, and with a little Rod-Serling-level ironic fillip at the conclusion. To add to the amusement, there's more than a little risible dialogue (Billie Whitelaw is wasted in a role given over almost entirely to this); though Hitchcock has had some past success in bending the work of hack scenarists to his purposes, with Anthony Shaffer's wholly wind-up script he has at last collided with the proverbial immovable object. Indeed, at one point, the director makes his own contribution to the film's repertory of the laughable: leading into a sequence in which we expect to see the protagonist escape from a prison-hospital ward by tracking along two rows of beds as their occupants stealthily rise from each of them, as though about to embark on a mass exodus (it transpires they're merely spectators), as synchronously as the Rockettes.

Now no one can deny that *The Lady Vanishes* and *The 39 Steps* were witty, and perhaps they *were* witty in a way that the later films aren't (though I would argue the later work to be no less funny). But were they laughable? And

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were they so utterly devoid, as *Frenzy* is, of a sense of genuine menace? What *Frenzy* is, in fact, is Hitchcock's most stodgy film since *Dial M for Murder*, and, beyond that, quite possibly his least interesting film from any period. To be sure, it is well-made—"immaculately crafted," in the phrase of one of its admirers, characterizes it all too well—but then virtually any Hitchcock film would resemble the Sistine Chapel compared with the shoddiness of *Topaz*, and Gilbert Taylor, *Frenzy*'s photographer, has lent this same clean, crisp look to the work of any number of other directors. Compared with the stylistic excitement of a film such as *Walkabout*, I value the craftsmanly sheen of *Frenzy* at next to nothing. And given all the rubbish that is spoken both by Hitchcock and his adulators about his "mastery of purely visual communication," it was instructive to spend a few minutes watching *Frenzy* before a dozing projectionist turned on the sound at a reel change, and find myself completely unable to follow what was happening, though what was disturbing to me was not that but the realization that I didn't even care.

WHAT *is* interesting in *Frenzy* are two things that are new to Hitchcock, neither of them auspicious. Though nothing in Hitchcock's latest film is extraordinarily violent by current standards, the climaxing of a scene of murder with a close shot of the strangled victim's distorted features while the music swells to a crescendo is extraordinary, by the standards of earlier Hitchcock, in its explicitness and blatancy. Hitchcock has stated in interviews how he availed himself in *Frenzy* of the screen's new permissiveness in the representation of violence and nudity, but surely the man who created a sequence both so vivid and so elliptical as the stabbing in the shower in *Psycho* has nothing to gain in expressive power from lingering on a corpse's face. It isn't a case of taking advantage of new resources for expressive purposes, but of exploiting them to satisfy an audience's taste—that taste he has heretofore always subverted—for the sensationally horrific detail.

The subsequent murder is tactfully committed off-screen, though evincing tact, at that juncture, is a bit like locking the stable after the horses have fled. Yet it, too, furnishes an occasion for the director's catering to an audience's tastes, as Hitchcock tracks away from the door of the room in which the crime is taking place, down a stairway, and out of the building into the street. Like an earlier sequence in which the screen is silent for an extended length of time while we wait for the scream we know will come with someone's discovery of a corpse, the virtuoso camera movement serves no other purpose, given the context and circumstances, than milking the applause of the cognoscenti; they are the equivalent in films of Illinois Jacquet honking his way through an old "Jazz at the Philharmonic" concert. There was already an anticipation of this in *Topaz*, in the "beautiful" overhead shot of the Cuban spy collapsing as she dies, her flowing robe billowing around her like the petals opening in some accelerated view of the blooming of a flower. There have been breathtakingly beautiful things in Hitchcock before: though *Vertigo* comes immediately to mind, I'm thinking rather of such things as the assassination in the rain in *Foreign Correspondent* and the last shot of *The Birds*, among others, and, of course, Hitchcock's films are nothing if not works of a dazzling technical virtuosity. But even at its most flamboyant—as in the astonishing crane shot in *Young and Innocent* that moves from the entirety of a crowded hotel dining room to a tight close-up of the disguised face of a hunted killer, the needle in the haystack, as a nervous tic gives him away—that virtuosity was harnessed to some purpose, and one could delight in it for what one felt to be the director's delight in a problem solved. (The problem-solving in *Frenzy* would seem to be mainly at the level of constructing a potato bikini so as to preserve the modesty of a nude corpse as it is removed from a sack of potatoes, which is even more depressing when I recall that I might have wanted to describe the unsettlingly erotic use made of a corpse in Makaveyev's *Love Affair* as "Hitchcockian.") It was bad enough in the 50's (*To Catch a Thief*, etc.) to see Hitchcock (whose work, at its best, is so bound up with his aggression toward the spectator) trying to please his audience; to see him now, performing tricks to please his admiring critics, is really more than I care to endure.

IN A film magazine's recent issue devoted to the work of Elia Kazan, one of film criticism's loftiest personages is to be found contributing an article on "The Kazan Problem," which turns out to be not the problem of how a director of Kazan's sensibility could have acquired his reputation, but rather "that of accounting for his two great films." (Lest one think that loftiness in film criticism is no index to discrimination, in another recent film magazine, in an article on Edgar G. Ulmer, that most esoteric of cult figures, one can read: "All in all, Ulmer has directed 128 films. . . . Though not all his films are great . . .") I have little inclination to argue further the question of Hitchcock's greatness with his more extreme partisans; they have been raked over the coals often enough, and usually by people with whom I find myself far less in sympathy. After all, I, too, am an admirer of Hitchcock, not a detractor. Still, when coming across something as egregious as Vincent Canby's recent attempt to dissociate himself from Hitchcock's more rabid devotees by blithely proclaiming Hitchcock's greatness despite the fact of his films not being "about" anything, I can begin to feel again that it's from his admirers and not his detractors that Hitchcock needs defending.

Yes, I think it's worth insisting that Hitchcock's films are about something; about a number of things, and even occasionally, as in *Stage Fright*, however minor a work, about such classically literary things as reality and illusion, life and theater. Elsewhere, in a long piece to which this is of necessity a kind of postscript, I've

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tried to describe in detail what one Hitchcock film is about,* but what all Hitchcock films (at least, all of his successful ones) are irreducibly about is the experience of being frightened by them; they are about the anxiety and terror they communicate—that anxiety that lies just beneath the surface of almost all his best work, and surfaces full-blown in the terror of *The Birds* and *Psycho*—and profound to the extent that we feel that terror profoundly. Nor is this quite so remote from "the kind of important subjects that can be adequately dealt with in the language of literary criticism," as Canby giddily claims Hitchcock's films to be in attempting to exempt them from the criteria which an adequately literate criticism might impose. Rather, one is reminded of the esteem in which the experience of terror has been held by literary criticism from its Aristotelian origins. What Hitchcock's films communicate to us at their best is a sense of their creator's being in touch with our deeply buried, primal and universal fears, and, with this, effecting our recognition of how vulnerable to those fears, despite all our defenses, we remain.

Though there is, in fact, no Hitchcock film I would want to call great, and many in which I've been disappointed, there is still probably no other film director to whose new work I would rush so unhesitatingly and with so much anticipation of immediate pleasure. My problem with Hitchcock is in reconciling the director of those Hitchcock films I admire most with that of those I find disappointing, and the disappointments are to be found in all periods; *The Paradine Case* follows *Notorious*, and *Young and Innocent*, as weak a Hitchcock film as his most recent ones, was sandwiched between *Sabotage* and *The Lady Vanishes*. It is not that he has failed, however, but something about the character of his failures (as of many of his "successes")—their ready embrace of compromise, the ease with which they shed ambition—that makes Hitchcock so problematical. Despite his recent work, I have no sense of Hitchcock's being in decline, in the way the slack, self-indulgence of Howard Hawk's late work bespeaks decline; and, until *Frenzy*, none of even the most recent failures has been without interest: *Marnie* and *Torn Curtain*, aside from some local brilliance, for the ghost of a conception that one can fleetingly apprehend in them, and even *Topaz* in its attempt to develop some aspects of *Torn Curtain* on a larger canvas. These failures, like Hitchcock's earlier ones, seem to owe not to decline but to withdrawal, to some almost deliberate pulling back from the audacity of *Psycho* and *The Birds*. Why does a man who has just made *Psycho* and *The Birds*, and who is free to make the film he wants, make first *Marnie* and then *Torn Curtain*? How can a director still capable, I am convinced, of making films as profoundly terrifying as *Psycho* and *The Birds* be content to make instead a work as toothless—fangless, one might better say—as *Frenzy*? And, of course, the problem these questions point to is not just mine but Hitchcock's also.

In the past, I've been inclined to seek complex answers to these questions, but I'm increasingly persuaded that the truth is to be found in simpler ones. (Hitchcock himself has some alibis, usually in the way of complaining of his actors, though blame directed at Julie Andrews and Paul Newman for the faults of *Torn Curtain*, when they were chosen to provide box-office insurance against a repetition of his preceding films' disappointing reception, seems blame ungraciously misplaced. Hitchcock has been both a brilliant and a slovenly director of actors, and his comments on the defects of his actors have been equally unreliable. To have wanted Harry Carey for the part Otto Kruger played in *Saboteur* is totally in keeping with his perverse humor, but to lament the deficiencies of Joel McCrea in *Foreign Correspondent* or Farley Granger in *Strangers on a Train* seems inexplicably unappreciative of the way the personalities of these actors ideally suit those works.) Among directors enjoying a comparable critical prestige, Hitchcock has a record of virtually unparalleled popular success, and yet it may be that in some ways Hitchcock's success has been as crippling to his career as Orson Welles's failure to his. For I've come increasingly to believe that the key to Hitchcock's checkered career is fear of failure, fear of getting as far ahead of his audience as his artistic temperament would seem to place him. My charge against recent Hitchcock, as against the Hitchcock of the mid-50's and some Hitchcock prior to that, is nakedly *ad hominem*: it is of timidity, of a cowardly retreat from those risks a full commitment to his art would demand of him. Hitchcock has his fame, his new honorary degree from Columbia University, and the uncritical admiration of a pack of "critical" admirers. He has everything he might want, except for the achievement of those films he might make were he to allow himself consistently to follow his artistic impulses wherever they might lead, or drive, him. The title is *Frenzy*, but there is no frenzy in it. I could think of few sadder things in films were Hitchcock, having returned with such acclaim to this form, never again to return to the form of *The 39 Steps* and *Shadow of a Doubt*, *Vertigo*, and *The Birds*.

* "The Director Vanishes," in *Twenty-four Times a Second* (Harper & Row).

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Books in Review

Government and Press

THE PAPERS & THE PAPERS: AN ACCOUNT OF THE LEGAL AND POLITICAL BATTLE OVER THE PENTAGON PAPERS. By SANFORD J. UNGAR. *Dutton. 319 pp. $7.95.*

Reviewed by JOSEPH W. BISHOP, JR.

A FREE press cannot be a patriotic press. In George Orwell's words, "freedom of the press, if it means anything at all, means freedom to criticize and oppose." John F. Kennedy said much the same thing, from a rather different angle of observation: "Always remember that their [the newspapers'] interests and ours ultimately conflict." Both were right. There is no such thing in a democratic country as a newspaper whose guiding principle is to support the policies of whatever government happens to have been elected. The major goals of both the New York *Times* and the Chicago *Tribune*, aside from making money, are (a) to score a clean news beat and (b) to discredit politicians who fail to follow the advice of their publishers and editors. There is room for argument as to which goal is dominant. Whether the *Times* (or the Washington *Post*) would have printed the Pentagon Papers if they had revealed sound decisions, reached after grave and wise deliberation, is a question on which speculation is interesting, but unprofitable. (It *is* fairly safe to say that, if the Pentagon Papers had fit that description, the *Times* would have been most unlikely to win a Pulitzer prize for printing them.) But when both these goals can be achieved at a single stroke, other considerations would have to be of extraordinary weight to tilt the scale against publication.

Thus, there was nothing surprising in the great confrontation between government and press in the affair of the Pentagon Papers. What is surprising, given the porosity of the executive branch's system of keeping secrets, is that something like it had not happened long before. Nor were the revelations really startling: most of what was in the documents was already known or surmised.

Nevertheless, there is much of interest in Mr. Ungar's story. For one thing, there is the sheer size of the security breach—47 fat volumes, running to more than 7,000 pages, each and every page classified "Top Secret." There were the majesty and pomp of the triumph which the *Times* and *Post* awarded themselves for having saved the Republic. Most engrossing of all, Mr. Ungar has given us an unusual and valuable clinical study of the policymaking process within the governmental hierarchies of great newspapers, with Executive Editors, Managing Editors, and Bureau Chiefs, *clarissimi, spectabiles,* and *illustres,* engaging sometimes in shouting matches, sometimes in intrigues of Byzantine intricacy, pushing and pulling the Emperor this way and that. (Neither Arthur Ochs Sulzberger nor Katharine Graham cuts a very impressive figure in Mr. Ungar's account.)

THE tale is not ill told. Mr. Ungar has really tried to tell it accurately and fairly. He does not, of course, succeed very well. A reporter for the *Post,* he has the political coloration appropriate to his environment; no matter how valiantly he tries, he can no more write objectively about such limbs of Satan as the President and Vice President, the Attorney General and the Chief Justice, than an arctic fox can turn gray in winter. Likewise, he knows a great many facts that aren't. He states flatly, for example, that President Kennedy's approval of a "defensive security alliance" with the Diem government in South Vietnam was "a flagrant—albeit secret—violation of the Geneva Accords"—a statement which overlooks, among other things, the fact that neither the United States nor South Vietnam was a signatory to those Accords. Like many or most representatives of the news media, he sees no significant difference between Mr. Agnew's free exercise of his First-Amendment rights and governmental suppression of hostile comment. The press is, in fact, as morbidly sensitive to criticism by Messrs. Nixon and Agnew as those politicians are to unkind treatment by the media. The reaction of a *Times* editor to one of Mr. Agnew's speeches (referred to as "tirades" by Mr. Ungar) is that of a medieval Pope to a sermon by Bishop Pike —incredulity, followed by apoplexy, followed by *anathema maranatha,* an auto-da-fé, and a new entry in the *Index Librorum Prohibitorum.* (Mr. Ungar reveals in a guileless aside that "there was a strong body of opinion within the American press that repeatedly argued that Agnew should be ignored," presumably by reporting his orations on page 17, or not at all.) But oftener than not Mr. Ungar honestly tries; he actually concedes, for instance, that the administration may have had motives besides inveterate hatred of the First Amendment for trying to enjoin the publication of the papers, or some of them. Likewise, he delineates very fairly the odd character of Daniel Ellsberg.* If I cannot give him better than a C+ for objectivity, I gladly award him an A for effort. Indeed, at times he has included more facts than are requisite to an understanding of his chronicle—e.g., a biographical sketch of the Honorable Maurice Gravel (D., Alaska), possibly the most erratic member of Congress since the Honorable Marion A. Zioncheck (D., Washington). But almost all of his details are at least entertaining; the book is excellent light reading.

If some pestiferous little Peterkin inquires, "But what good came of it at last?," old Kaspar can only repeat the general editorial opinion that "'twas a famous victory." The publication caused no

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* See his *Papers on the War,* Simon & Schuster, 309 pp., $8.95.

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visible harm to the security of the United States; nor, on the other hand, did it contribute very much to public enlightenment. Those who were against the war were no more strongly opposed to it after than before; those who favored it, or at least Mr. Nixon's handling of it, were of the same opinion still; those who were of two minds remained in that condition. The question of the constitutionality of prior restraints on publication was not greatly clarified: although all nine Justices of the Supreme Court hastily composed separate and lengthy opinions, the actual holding of the Court was only that the government had not carried its "heavy burden of showing justification" for prior restraint of publication. None of the opinions made clear why that burden should be heavier than it is when the government seeks to inflict punishment for an unauthorized publication. It is true that in England the liberty of unlicensed printing is much older than the idea that men should be free to say what they think without fear of punishment. But that seems to be an accident of history rather than a deliberate decision on a matter of high principle. When the Parliament of 1695 allowed the Licensing Act to expire, it did not do so because the members were convinced by the arguments of Milton and Locke; the reenacting measure died in the closing hours of a turbulent session simply because the Lords and Commons could not find time to agree on the details of reform of the administrative procedures of licensing.

IN SHORT, the great case did not settle very much. But it raised, if only by implication, some important and difficult problems which Mr. Ungar either did not believe it was within the province of a reporter to discuss or (perhaps more probably) did not perceive. Here are a few of them:

1) What sort of reasonable balance can be struck between the undoubted right and duty of the executive branch (asserted by every President from Washington to Nixon) to keep some matters secret in the national interest, and the public interest in checking the propensity of bureaucrats, of high and low degree, to keep almost everything secret, whether to avoid exposure of their own folly and venality, or simply out of force of habit? This problem was raised more than once in George Washington's administration; he found, for example, that "a just regard to the Constitution and to the duty of my office . . . forbids a compliance" with a Congressional request for documents bearing on the negotiation of a treaty with England. But no solution has been devised in one hundred and eighty years, and maybe none is imaginable. It has been suggested that the President and/or Congress should provide that every secret document shall automatically be declassified after a fairly short period unless the government can persuade an impartial board (but who would sit on it?) that continued secrecy is required in the interest of national security. But national security is not the only consideration justifying secrecy. If we assume, as I think we must, that there is justification for the maintenance of some sort of "loyalty-security" files on office-holders and office-seekers, it is obvious that there are good reasons, having nothing to do with the safety of the nation, for not publishing those files. Few, if any, liberals objected when President Truman forbade the furnishing of such information to congressional committees.

2) A consideration which was present in the Pentagon-Papers case, and which has been overlooked by Mr. Ungar and almost everybody else, is the desirability of permitting subordinate functionaries to express unpopular opinions without fear of being dragooned or blacklisted by politicians and polemicists on the other side of the question. The official who *makes* a policy decision ought, of course, to be answerable for it to Congress and the public; but people like William P. Bundy (an Assistant Secretary of State in the Johnson administration) ought to be free to give their honest advice, however wrong, to their superiors without fear of being vilified by people like Richard Falk or excluded from academic employment in the Ivy League. Bundy happens to be sol-

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In 1970-71, the tranquil academic year, over one thousand institutions were still reporting protests.
RESEARCH Winter

Colleges can facilitate anti-war work of individual students, faculty members and organized groups by collecting them in a single place and by drawing on the understanding of issues gained through research and scholarship. Hard as it is to draw the line in either theory or practice, however, universities as institutions should not be committed to a single position on the war.
David Riesman *Inside Academe*

One benefit to politicians at large of colleges is that college graduates vote Republican more often than their non-college counterparts, albeit, theirs is a more *liberal* vote than traditional Republicans.
EDITORIAL November

Most American intell... academics A...

...the first ...institution where the ...ulty went on strike for better ...lary and working conditions.
...EPORTS February

...but pigs exist in order to be ...aughtered," protested Litwak. ...owever, administrative barbarism ...mpelled teachers like Litwak to ...n the strike. Moreover, for the ...iking profs the old certitudes, ...d the old alliances, were dead.
...chard J. Margolis February

...you collected tinfoil for Loyalist ...ain, boycotted Japanese goods, ...d sang "Kevin Barry" back in ...e thirties, if you fought for ...edom in the forties, if you ...posed McCarthy (Joeseph), ...itformed for "Negro History" ...d desegration in the fifties, and ...came a member of the Academic ...tablishment in the sixties, you ...y well wonder with Nathan ...azer, "How does a radical end up ...onservative early in the 1970's?" ...is simply that he has continued ...step to the old music after the ...w Left joined the parade and ...gan to march *contretemps*.
...K. Barasch November

...lumbia drove me half-crazy ...isting that I pretend that the ...wer of the academic was the ...wer of learning. NYU demanded ... such pretensions...the slight ...ch of raunchiness made NYU ...ealing....What other university ...ld build a student center when ...library was comic, or be so bland ... the systematic destruction of ...enwich Village, center of those ...ilities which a great university ...ght have been expected to ...otect and nourish?
...nard Kriegel November

In 1939, women held 30% of the faculty jobs—40% in 1879. By the early 1960's, however, 37% of the teaching and professional staff positions in colleges and universities were part-time, and women were—and are—heavily represented. In this group, of course, they are expendables.
Ruth Hawkins *Inside Academe*

If a tenured professor at Stanford cannot speak without risk of dismissal, obviously no teacher is secure. The people threatened are by no means limited to Communist revolutionaries, militant anti-imperialists or even protestors against the Indochina war.
Bruce Franklin June

Not to have disciplined Franklin [Bruce] would have represented ... truly the ultimate ... academic life ...

...great ...typical New York ...professor. Disenchanted with experimental colleges organized so that middle class students could have more fun, I suggested that radical teachers should go to schools where working class students predominated. And then I did. Now in my second year there, I have sufficiently recovered from culture shock to share some observations about working with working class students.
Alan Wolfe February

If anything is happening anywhere in instruction, the community colleges are likely to be doing it. They are the foremost enthusiasts of instructional systems, auto-instructural programming, mechanized laboratories and every machine adaptable for instructional or educational use.
Arthur Cohen & Florence Brawer Winter

William F. Buckley, in one of his rare flashes of insight, said not long ago that he would rather be governed by the first two hundred names in the Boston telephone directory than by the Harvard faculty. The observation was made in the wake of the student uprising in Cambridge, when the faculty debated the crisis endlessly without coming to grips with the real issues.
Fred Hechinger February

...one must look deeply into the very nature of institutions of learning in order to more rationally purport himself as a teacher... The general implications are actually religious in nature, that the school be the cultural focus for communication among persons as they are in their own right.... One cannot avoid taking responsibility for changes in the institution as well as the classroom.
LETTERS March

Back in 1966 Lyndon Johnson and Congress passed one of the most important pieces of legislation this country has ever had in the field of international affairs and foreign policy—the International Education Act....In the five years since the bill was signed not a single appropriation has been made for carrying it out, and what might have been one of the most important contributions the United States could have made to world peace and world understanding was carelessly thrown away in favor of waging a colonial war.
Harold Taylor November

The movement ends not with a bang but a whimper, and a new ... of disengagement, ... unlike the ...

...Winter

Mao's phrase, "Let a thousand flowers bloom," could be the theme of the 1971 Antioch catalog. It pictures a series of Antiochs blooming on receding hills. Prospective students must be a little disoriented by a catalog that opens with the quote "Nothing can be exactly defined" and describes Antioch as a "multitude of educational sorties" that emerge as old forms and fail to meet new needs.
Gerald Grant *forthcoming*

It would be blatantly unfair to lay all responsibility for academia's problems, and their resolution at the professorial doorstep. But there is considerable support for the view that faculties fail to make appropriate connections between their professional behavior and the well-being of both their own institutions and of higher education in general.
John C. Honey June

Richard Nixon and his advisers wanted to re-define the basic relationship between education and the Federal government; and so construed their proposed new Foundation for Higher Education as institutional proof of a striking new policy....But whether by simple process, or a prior determination that Nixon was out to do them in, the spokesmen for the American universities displayed a failure of imagination so total that the promising idea was lost, and a lack of political sophistication so stunning that one might conclude he would be better off with ... spokesmen at all.
Chester E. ...

...about the ...ooning.
...Hook November

One reason for the special possibilities of nonviolent change in America is that there are few other countries where the younger generation and their part in the development of a new culture, a new society and a new educational system are taken with such seriousness and concern.
Harold Taylor November

At one time the application of uniform academic standards was decidedly progressive. Immigrant groups excluded from higher education through quota systems regarded such merit criteria as test scores and grades as the primary channel of mobility in an ascriptive society. Now that they have themselves achieved success, they view with horror the abolition of merit criteria, particularly for college entry. Open admission threatens these people (and, more widely, the "haves" of American society) precisely because it challenges the legitimacy of the principle that justifies their position.
Jerome Karabel May

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#20, summer-fall 1972
250 pages
PSYCHOLOGICAL MAN:
APPROACHES TO AN
EMERGENT SOCIAL TYPE

Salmagundi

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vent and well-connected; as much cannot be said for most career civil servants. As a medium-level civil servant, I wrote some memoranda in 1952 and 1953 which I might have phrased with much more caution, not to say cowardice, if I had thought they were likely to be read by Senator Joe McCarthy. (I prefer to think I wouldn't have, but I'm not sure I was all that brave.) Future cabinet officers are likely to think several times before they order the compilation of anything like the Pentagon Papers—which will be a great loss to historians and may lessen the ability of future governments to profit from the mistakes of their predecessors.

3) Why should the decision about what the public shall be told (in the form of news or editorial opinion, or a mixture of the two) be left to the discretion of a few rich men and women who happen to inherit newspapers and television stations? Here, I am afraid, I can think of no better method of insuring that most opinions will find expression. Some publishers, to be sure, are conservative or reactionary, but about as many are Social-Register socialists, hot for any reform which is not likely to endanger their own fortunes or power.

4) One more very old-fashioned, and very unfashionable, consideration: is it right for a man to betray a trust, to break his word and break the law, because he believes that doing so will serve a purpose which he thinks good? Why should Daniel Ellsberg be held in greater honor than Otto Otepka, who was fired from the State Department for passing to the Senate Committee on Internal Security classified "loyalty-security" documents on employees whom he thought subversive? (Mr. Ungar makes only one very incidental allusion to Otepka.) A distressing number of liberals, if the question occurred to them at all, would answer that Ellsberg was right because his purpose was good, and Otepka was wrong because his purpose was bad. Certainly Otepka had no defenders on either the *Times* or the *Post*, both of which censured his conduct in the strongest terms. But they might have said to Ellsberg, and to all the other self-appointed saviors, from those who block traffic to those who murder harmless tourists in airports, who are sure that the rightness of their convictions puts them above both law and conventional morality, as well as to Otepka, what Oliver Cromwell said to the zealots of another age: "I beseech you, in the bowels of Christ, think it possible you may be mistaken."

Sentimental Journey

SOULS ON FIRE: PORTRAITS AND LEGENDS OF THE HASIDIC MASTERS. By ELIE WIESEL. Translated by Marion Wiesel. *Random House. 278 pp. $7.95.*

Reviewed by FREDERICK GARBER

ELIE WIESEL ended *One Generation After*, his previous book, with an announcement (in tone somewhere between exasperation and disgust) that his work was entering a new phase because all that he had shown about the Holocaust could not change the tenor of a single headline. Until then his writings had dwelt obsessively on one subject: the ovens of Auschwitz and their connection with our present condition, though lately he had begun to move elsewhere in Jewish history, forward from the camps but with a look back at all the roads leading up to them. Those forays into the hell of a generation ago had sought for ways to force us actually to smell the burnt flesh of six million bodies. Yet the story was always his own story, its meaning emergent from a self-centeredness that was as proper and foreseeable as it was artistically perilous.

Souls on Fire, a volume of Hasidic tales as retold by Wiesel, is the first product of his change of approach. To be sure, Hasidic tales are studded throughout Wiesel's novels. Here, however, he is no longer a messenger from the dead but the transmitter of that which he sees as eternally living. He wants to recreate "the charac-

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FREDERICK GARBER, *a new contributor, is professor of comparative literature at the State University of New York in Binghamton.*

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ters that peopled his universe, the universe of his childhood," to put in order for himself, now, after all, the personalities he had heard of from his Hasidic grandfather. Accordingly, he is especially drawn to tales which "give the measure of the man," the *Tzaddik* about whom they are told.

If Hasidic tales are in themselves not a new element in Wiesel's work, neither is the episodic mode they exemplify as a literary form. Wiesel has worked in this episodic mode throughout his writing career, and indeed his strength as a novelist comes precisely out of the traditions he utilizes in *Souls on Fire*. He can be masterful at a brief, incisive scene of extraordinary pressure and intensity, such as the hallucinatory vision in *Dawn* or Katriel's parable in the otherwise maudlin *A Beggar in Jerusalem*—scenes which are themselves cast in the mold of those same legends that we find here, and that have been the stuff of his imagination since earliest childhood. In *Souls on Fire*, where he is working at the very source of this material, there are, not surprisingly, a goodly number of such scenes—pungent and resonant with illuminated meaning.

Yet for all the drama and sense of mystery which Wiesel conveys, something is missing at the heart of this book. Wiesel tells us that he has ignored "theories" for the sake of character, but the fact is that character is precisely what the book lacks. Here, as in his novels, Wiesel tends to mistake the amassing of personality traits —Rabbi Zusia's fathomless humility, for example, or the puzzling flamboyance of Israel of Rizhin; the Bratzlaver's egocentricity and astonishing gift of narrative, or the crushing despair of Menahem Mendl of Kotsk—for the creation of a living personality; only rarely does the spark jump the gap and make a character dance with life. The consequence is that we are left only with hearsay about the charisma Wiesel tells us these people possessed and with no living sense of that blazing power of intellect—its name is religious genius—which dazzled their disciples and antagonists alike.

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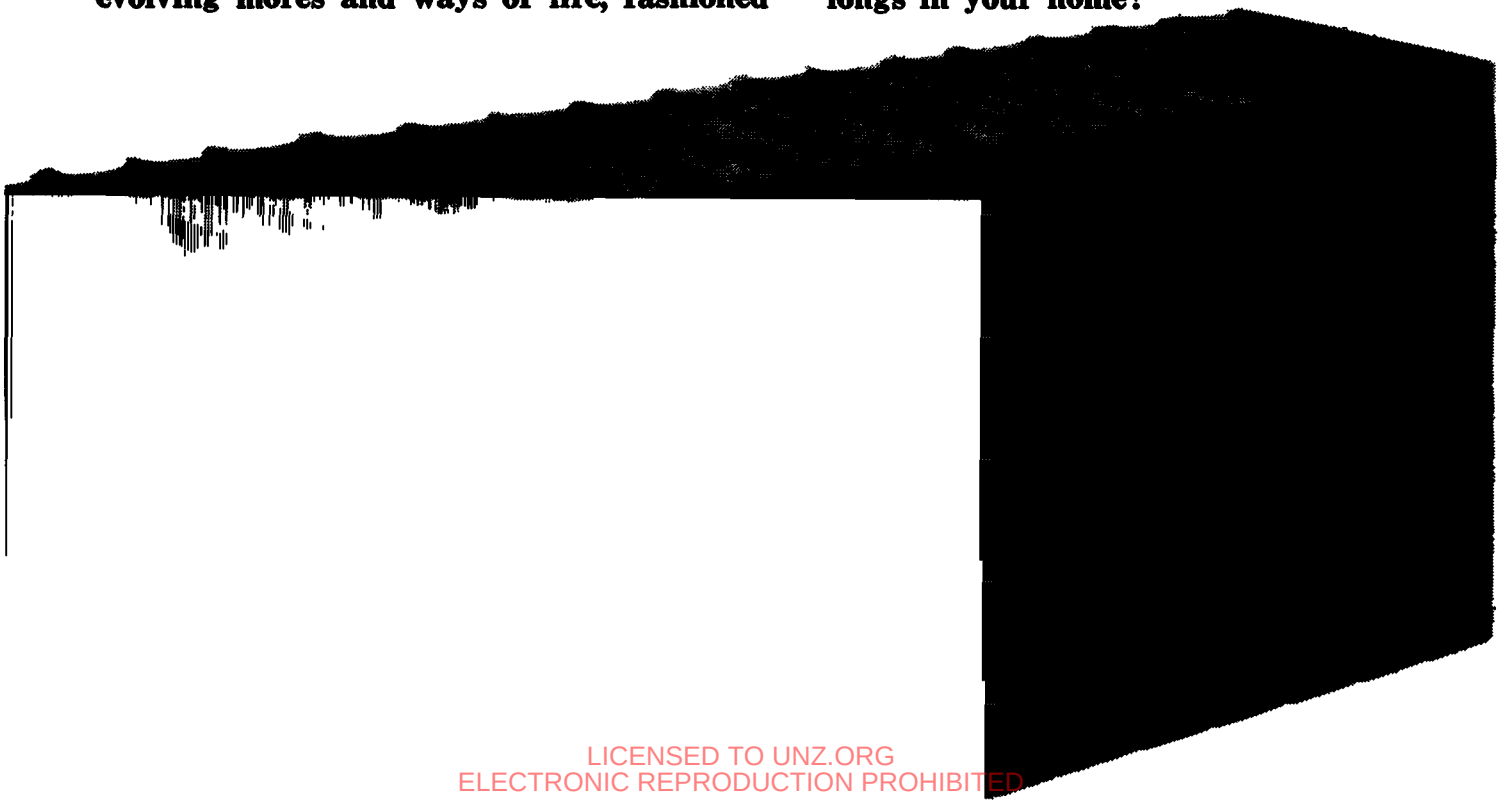

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True, these essays originated as lectures, and it may be that Wiesel's exceptional passion and personal presence lent them that warmth of life which is lacking here. But in print only a very few of the *Tzaddikim* emerge with any degree of conviction; the rest are shackled by varying degrees of sentimentalism.

By sentimentalism in this connection, I mean mainly a tendency to exploit the easier possibilities of the material. For example, dealing as he does here with mystics and individuals of the very highest order of intuition, Wiesel quite appropriately reports what must have been extraordinary incidents of foresight on the part of several *Tzaddikim*, premonitions of the terror beyond imagination which would come to pass in the Holocaust a hundred years later. Yet he can also pass with jarring tastelessness from such cryptic and mysterious episodes to the melodramatic story of Zusia and Elimelekh's vague uneasiness in a village where, sometime in the middle 1800's, they refused to spend the night—the village of Auschwitz.

This tendency to go soft where hardness is required is, I think, the besetting flaw in Wiesel's work generally, and it is perhaps more apparent in *Souls on Fire* than in his earlier books. In the novels one could watch the struggle of the bruised survivor of Auschwitz to make a style out of despair. One had to recognize that the struggle was never totally successful, but one also had to recognize that the events Wiesel was trying to mold into art had brought civilization down so many notches that to make meaningful sense of them was beyond nearly every possibility of prose. *Souls on Fire,* however, takes in other territory, finding food for post-Holocaust souls in 18th-century geniuses. Hence it is especially disappointing to discover that as we reach deeper into the book it becomes vaguer and more shrill, at its core a large blur which belies its surface persuasiveness and the admirable intensity of its passion.

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Heart & Mind

SCIENCE AND SENTIMENT IN AMERICA: PHILOSOPHICAL THOUGHT FROM JONATHAN EDWARDS TO JOHN DEWEY. By MORTON WHITE. *Oxford University Press. 358 pp. $8.95.*

Reviewed by ALAN GOLDFEIN

NEAR the end of his new book, Morton White says that "on all the lower floors of philosophical anti-intellectualism we can hear the noise of philosophers who live at the top. Those Americans who have lived at the very top of our high culture have thumped their message down to lower floors for two hundred years." Now, of course, the high-level thumping has stopped, and the philosophers at the top have abandoned the heart for the head. There is still a thumping going on—it may even be louder than ever—but it is left now to sound alone in the hearts of "philosophasters" and kids. We have many specialized epistemologists and great-souled sages today, but no middlemen of "the grand manner" who reflect on the broader aspects of civilization as well as on the narrow, who feel called upon to wrestle with science as well as sentiment (and who sometimes even get them to embrace), who are "technicians but not mere technicians," who are "seers but not madmen." Not since John Dewey have we had whole men like these. Yet these are the only kind of men who can reach moral truth, and who can perhaps temper the thumping going on down below with some other and more moderate means of communication. This is the view—it is more like a plea—that Morton White puts forth as he traces the great high road of American philosophy from Jonathan Edwards to Dewey.

Temper the thumping down below and bring the heart back to the head up top; we are hearing this message a lot from writers about philosophy lately. So much so that if this message were the only virtue of *Science and Sentiment in America* it would be a questionable one for thumping, or even temperate tapping, even from as distinguished a student of ideas as Morton White. If rigid specialization exists on one side and anti-literate intuition on the other, who in the world is expected to be reading a book about the problem? Its very existence precludes the need to describe it, for there is no audience. Perhaps this is why such books turn out usually to be deadening and disorganized lamentations that plunk like used out ping-pong balls between mental logic and emotional lightning. But here is an admirable book, and one well worth the reading by both philosophers and historians of ideas. It is not like the ones I have just described. Not until the epilogue, at any rate, and by then you have read the body of the book, and have seen its virtues, and you don't mind—at least not too much.

To begin with the virtues. As I see it there are two major ones. First—and there is wedged in here a major contribution to the history of ideas—White points out that the main argument of the Declaration of Independence is as much a product of the native American democratic animus as it is the legacy of John Locke. For while Locke's moral philosophy rested on self-evident principles which could be accounted for by reason, those principles, when enunciated by the framers of the Declaration, rested on sentiment and affection. The influence at the top was principally that of Jonathan Edwards, who had added his "Sense of the Heart" to the empiricism and rationality of Locke. And the irony was that while Locke had avoided senses of the heart, or innate principles, for democratic reasons, fearing that in England they might be used to justify the conservative feudal tradition, his own use of deduction was modified on this side of the Atlantic because it represented heady stuff above the democratic and anti-intellectual hearts of "ordinary men and farmers." In effect, Locke was out-democrated and out-sentimentalized by men using a method which he regarded as reactionary. True, some of this has already been said by American intellectual historians like Staughton Lynd and Bernard Bailyn, but what White contributes is a sharper presentation of the implicit distinctions between innate and self-evident, and also the development of the idea that in America the heart remained alluring, as a source of knowledge and morality for everyman, as a "people's road" to truth, as "a form of populist anti-intellectualism"—even as in the later 19th century the influences of Darwin and Comte began to turn American philosophy in the scientific direction.

Emerson's heart was "Reason"; James's, the "Will to Believe"; and for Peirce it was the perceiving organ. Even in the philosophies of such ostensibly antagonistic figures as the idealist Josiah Royce and the empiricist Chauncey Wright, emotion played important roles. It is, in fact, especially important and significant that such scientifically minded men as Charles Peirce and Royce felt called upon to use one source as justification for the other, though from opposite directions. With Peirce pragmatism was justified by somewhat mystic universals, and with Royce the oversoul was fortified by logic.

And it is here that we encounter the second major virtue of *Science and Sentiment in America*. It helps to put in historical perspective the confusing contemporary joggling of philosophies on what one might call the lower floors of domestic intellectual life: where words that come from different sides of the tracks—like sensitivity and training—are coupled; where the scientific movement for ecological balance seems to have been able to enlist many of its young members only because they were previously trained in organic nature by the Yin-Yang set; where at times the head even seems to be used rigorously to justify its own domination by the heart. As White points out, John Dewey brought American philosophy into the action of life and so ended the dualism and tension between morals and science. But this also meant, unfortunately, that science in philosophy was

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ALAN GOLDFEIN's *review of* The End of the Modern Age *by Allen Wheelis appeared in our May number.*

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allowed to march off to the towers, while sentiment continued to flood the malls, leaving a meeting-ground only under the auspices of "philosophasters." Ironically, it was Dewey's interest in all the problems of living, especially in education and politics, which placed him in the great tradition of technician-seers and caused him at the same time to contribute toward ending that tradition. Emerson had looked down his nose at empirical "Understanding"—"that wrinkled calculator"—yet Dewey, along with Wright and James and Santayana, still found truths in the great Transcendentalist's visions. The truth for Dewey was Emerson's emphasis on life, on "the common experience of the everyday man." Dewey and Emerson were on different sides of "that wrinkled calculator," but as philosophers in the grand manner they were as one: critics of formalism and advocates of action. And this is the same combination that thrives today. It is still American, though the action has descended from the upper realms of specialized epistemology down into life and though it has certainly lost some valuable critical muscle in the fall.

IN HIS prologue, Morton White says that while his intention was to limit his focus "primarily to the most distinguished American philosophers," he also wanted to look at the "relationship between American philosophy and the world around it, both intellectual and social." In other words, he was approaching the history of ideas from the high *and* low roads (an attempt, I think, to exemplify his own entreaty to the American scholar—Emersonian in form, not content—to unite *all* the pathways: logic, learning, experience, and sentiment). The high road he has certainly traveled well. To my knowledge no one has done better. However, I think that White did forget the low road. Aside from some general statements there is very little of significance said about American social and cultural history as it relates to our philosophers' sometime preference for the heart over the head. What could be called a middle road had been taken by White in his earlier book, *Social Thought in America,* where he dealt with Dewey as well as with the maverick economist Thorstein Veblen, the jurist Oliver Wendell Holmes, Jr., the historian Charles Beard, and others. And the lower road has, of course, been surveyed already by the late Richard Hofstadter. Yet because White's views are somewhat different from Hofstadter's (notably that there can be intellectual anti-intellectualism), and because *Social Thought in America* dealt more with the end of formalism than with the question of science versus sentiment, White should have covered his projected low road more thoroughly.

Nonetheless, *Science and Sentiment in America* possesses a unity of theme, a clarity of style, and a precision of thought which make it an exceptionally readable book. It may well be that this particular theme—heart-mind duality—is the most perfectly chosen one for a history of American philosophy, because its very exposition forces the writer to avoid falsely smoothed-out coherences and badly patched-up consistencies. White explores the tensions and the incongruities in the minds of men like Royce and Peirce and James precisely because his theme *is* those tensions. He may be forced to stretch occasionally—as when he makes Chauncey Wright an advocate of feeling, albeit that feeling is relegated to the "poetic" world—but that, like his giant-stepping along the low road, is forgivable.

The Collector

DR. KINSEY AND THE INSTITUTE FOR SEX RESEARCH. By Wardell B. POMEROY. *Harper & Row. 479 pp. $10.00.*

Reviewed by BARRY GEWEN

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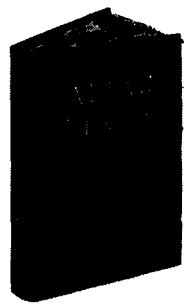

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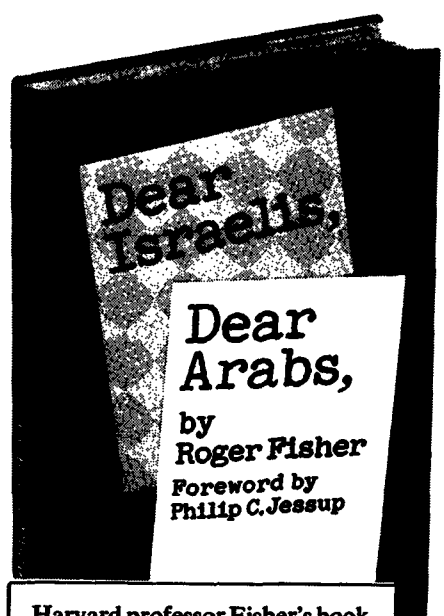

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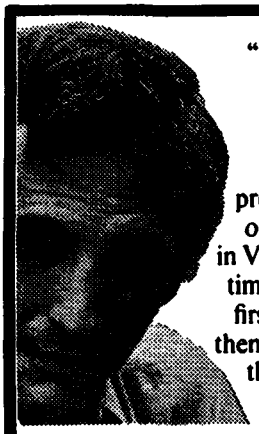

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since Freud." Wardell Pomeroy, therapist, marriage counselor, author of a pair of teen-age advice books (chastely separated into *Boys and Sex* and *Girls and Sex*), was Kinsey's closest associate for thirteen years. Of the 18,000 personal histories on file in the Indiana Institute which formed the basis for the two monumental volumes on American sexual behavior, Pomeroy and Kinsey together conducted 85 per cent of the interviews. In addition, every two years up to Kinsey's death in 1956 they exchanged their own personal histories in order to keep their files up to date—Pomeroy possibly knew more about Kinsey than any other living person, including Kinsey's wife. And Kinsey, it seems, *was* a remarkable man. Pomeroy's book, bordering at times on the worshipful, is testimony to his personal magnetism, his ability to inspire trust, generate intense loyalty, and dominate those around him by the force of his personality —in this, comparisons with Freud are certainly not misplaced. One colleague explained: "Somehow nothing defeated him. He was able to look through the ugliness to something lovely beyond. I often thought about him as an athlete of the spirit." What glimpse, then, does Pomeroy offer us of this amazing man?

Pomeroy's Kinsey is a collecting machine, and a cataloguing zealot. As a youth it was stamps, and as an Eagle Scout, merit badges, though perhaps one reads too much into Kinsey's life to see his adult patterns reflected all the way back to childhood. But at Harvard the boy blossomed into the man, and Alfred Kinsey, or at least Pomeroy's Kinsey, took off. Somehow his compulsive collecting energies got focused on gall wasps, with the result that Kinsey divided his time between cross-country hikes collecting bugs and long hours in the laboratory, classifying them according to twenty-eight different measurements. The gall wasp lived in oak trees, and so strenuously did Kinsey labor that "in time," says Pomeroy, "he became the leading authority in the world not only on these insects, but on oak trees as well." When Kinsey finally donated his wasp collection to the American Museum of Natural History, it had become the largest gift of its kind the museum was ever to receive, numbering over four million different specimens.

Along the way Kinsey collected a wife, the first girl he ever dated, but truly it was a marriage made in heaven: "After ignoring, or being ignored by, girls all his life, Kinsey had found the one in a million who was as fascinated by insects as he was," and, adds Pomeroy, "it was not surprising that she joined enthusiastically in the hunt for gall wasps." When the children, three of them, arrived and were old enough, they too went trekking through the woods looking for oak trees and collecting gall wasps.

The four million gall wasps might have grown to eight million but for the intervention of fate: in 1938 Indiana University decided to offer a marriage (that is, a sex) course, taught jointly by a law professor, an economics professor, a sociology professor, a philosophy professor, a biology professor, and a professor of medicine. And chosen to coordinate this rather touchy and bulky project was the world's leading authority on gall wasps. Kinsey, the collecting machine, had found his life's vocation and purpose, a dream to work toward: the goal of 100,000 personal histories. As he himself explained: "[The project] has given us a wealth of material by which . . . I hope to prove to the world someday that any subject may be a profitable field for scientific research if zealously pursued and handled with objective scholarship."

If Pomeroy's account is to be believed, it all happened automatically. Kinsey began by collecting wasps and then, simply because of an accident, turned to the sexual histories which were to make his name a household word. In Pomeroy's view, you could have wound up Dr. Kinsey, set him down in the streets of New York, and he would have happily spent the remainder of his life cataloguing every variety of garbage to be found on the city sidewalks. And if we add to this Pomeroy's personal description of Kinsey—everything from his

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drab exterior, his unchanging placidity, his weak sense of humor, his distrust of theory, his secretiveness, his formal table manners, his contempt for games and anything which seemed to him a waste of time, his rigidity, his crew cut, his love of routine, his abstinence from liquor and tobacco, his dry empiricism, his hatred of beards, his total lack of political interest, his insistence on precision, down to, and including, his ubiquitous bow tie—if we put all of this together we might indeed wonder how anyone could have worshiped him or found him "an athlete of the spirit." If anything, Pomeroy's Kinsey sounds like a walking illustration of the tyranny of the mean. How can we square this automaton, this least common denominator, with the man whose warmth, again to quote Pomeroy, "impressed everyone who met him"? Indeed, if this was Alfred Kinsey—whose life's work was measured by a number—how could he have persuaded anyone at all to reveal his deepest personal secrets to him?

BUT of course Pomeroy's Kinsey is not the real Alfred Kinsey, or at least not all of him, for what we have here is a onesided presentation, an advocate's brief. Pomeroy's book exists not only to recount the life of the man he admires but also to expound the proposition that Kinsey belongs with the immortals, and in order to make his case, Pomeroy is obliged to assert that what Kinsey did, i.e., describe and count, was the essence of science. Thus we have the dedication: "This book is dedicated to the scientific spirit and method in research that Alfred C. Kinsey epitomized and to which he gave his life." But because Pomeroy's definition of science, like Kinsey's, is quantification pure and simple, all methods and no spirit, he is compelled to focus on Kinsey the collector and underplay everything about the man that was intangible, psychological, irrational, everything that he loved about Kinsey—in short, everything that was human. The single most important decision in Kinsey's life must have been the one to shift from collecting wasps to human histories, but Pomeroy gives us no clue as to why the choice was made other than because Kinsey found himself "working in a research field virtually unexplored." But how did Kinsey get involved in the marriage course in the first place? Wasn't there anything about it that particularly sparked his interest? Was sexuality just another subject for him? Questions like those are avoided or ignored because a quantifier like Pomeroy has no way of dealing with internal states.

Kinsey was a quantifier too, but his disciple, in order to beatify him, has pushed the teacher's lesson beyond anything that was originally intended, sacrificing, in the process, the fullness of the man to the quantifier's ideal of the perfect scientist. The most revealing passage in the book is Pomeroy's response to the question of how he knew when an interviewee was lying. For Pomeroy the answer was simple: "There are only three possible ways of not telling the truth: by denying or covering up, by exaggerating, or by remembering incorrectly. Exaggeration was almost impossible with the system we used for asking questions rapidly and in detail. . . . Not remembering accurately could be dealt with statistically. . . . Covering up, however, was the most serious problem, since there were so many taboo items in most people's histories. But there were numerous cross-checks, so an answer at one point actually gave us a clue to an answer elsewhere." Yet Pomeroy has already given us Kinsey's own reply to exactly the same question: "The experienced interviewer knows when he has established a sufficient rapport to obtain an honest record in the same way that the subject knows that he can give that honest record to the interviewer. Learning to recognize these indicators, intangible as they may be, is the most important thing in controlling the accuracy of an interview." That is, what was a matter of human interaction, vibrations, and "feel" for Kinsey has been reduced to one, two, three by Pomeroy.

Interviewing wasn't the only lesson Pomeroy failed to grasp. "The trouble with you, Pomeroy," Kinsey once told him, "is that you don't appreciate the value of Freud. He was a great man." And Pomeroy never did get the point, although Freud hovers over his book like some kind of holy ghost. On the one hand he frequently pairs Kinsey with Freud in order to establish his hero's eminence and certify his achievement (*"Sexual Behavior in the Human Male* was as much a landmark in its field as Freud's first work had been"), but on the other, Pomeroy can never bring himself to believe that Freud was much more than a metaphysical moralist or that psychiatry was anything but a house of straw. And although he never says so, there is obviously little doubt in Pomeroy's mind that Kinsey's accomplishment ranks higher than Freud's. Indeed, how could it be otherwise, since according to Pomeroy's notion of science not only Freud, but even such "hard" scientists as Niels Bohr and Albert Einstein are little more than mushy theologians and mystics?

IRONICALLY, Kinsey the man has to be rescued from the clutches of his closest associate and greatest admirer, though in a sense Pomeroy knows what he is about: to retrieve Kinsey the man is to diminish the achievement of Kinsey the scientist—because if Pomeroy's behavioral picture of Alfred Kinsey is not the whole story, then Kinsey's quantitative approach to sexual behavior is not the whole story either, and some of the old questions concerning the Kinsey Report return. What was the point of collecting 100,000 histories anyway? What was to be gained? Is there anything to be learned from the Kinsey Reports other than that human sexuality is a wondrously varied phenomenon? Of course it is good to have that fact on record —many Americans, it seemed, needed to hear about it; and Kinsey's ideas about prison reform and the social treatment of deviance still wait to be acted upon. But once everyone understands that surfaces conceal a bewildering variety of behavior, there is really nothing else that numbers alone can tell us. Kinsey published his own findings after collecting only 18,000 histories; what could

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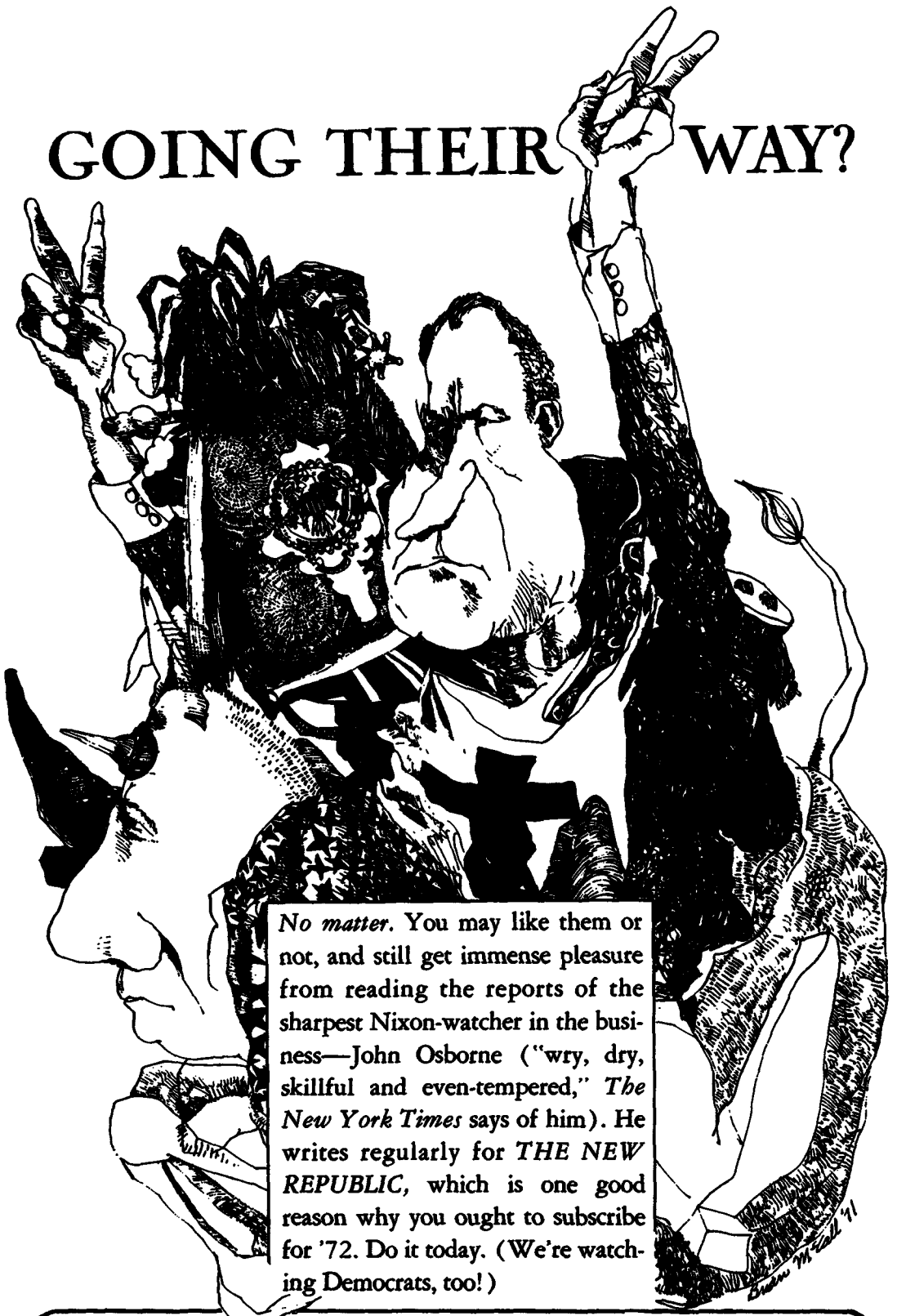

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he have added with 82,000 more?

Did Kinsey himself come to ask this question? Pomeroy suggests that Kinsey's premature death was at least in part attributable to the loss of financial support following publication of *Sexual Behavior in the Human Female*, but this is the voice of the disciple speaking, the advocate who continues to believe in the importance of his mentor's unfinished work. But might Kinsey's death not have been hastened by the loss of a sense of purpose, by the dawning realization that the goal he had set for himself was a meaningless one? Here too, perhaps, Pomeroy may simply have misunderstood what his teacher and idol was trying to tell him.

Family Theater

LILLIAN HELLMAN PLAYWRIGHT. By RICHARD MOODY. *Pegasus/Bobbs-Merrill. 372 pp. $6.95.*

THE COLLECTED PLAYS OF LILLIAN HELLMAN. *Little, Brown. 864 pp. $15.00.*

Reviewed by ELLEN MOERS

I HAVE just finished reading through the *Collected Plays* of Lillian Hellman with excitement and surprise—surprise, because I had forgotten about the theater. I had forgotten about Lillian Hellman too until her stunning memoir, *An Unfinished Woman*, appeared a year or so ago. But the plays are very different: less stagey than the book, more raw, more intimate.

All the plays (the eight original ones, that is, not the four adaptations) are built around two consuming obsessions: family and capital. Capital is power, lust, hate, duty, and destiny; like family, it is forever. The world of the Hellman family is as violent and dramatic as a summer thunderstorm, but just as dry and airless, and it is absolutely sealed off from strangers. (What other playwright would use the boarding-house setting as she does in *The Autumn Garden*: as arena for annual renewal of battle among old acquaintances, not, heaven forbid, a place of casual encounter?)

ELLEN MOERS *is the author of* The Dandy *and* Two Dreisers.

But it is an oddly real world, sometimes flat to the point of being funny in spite of the cruelty spread rawly before us, in spite of the horrors. "I'm told you work for a living," says the father to the whore his son is courting (*Another Part of the Forest*). "That is good: Oscar is not a rich man. . . .Oscar is a liar. Always has been. And he steals a little. Nothing much, not enough to be respectable. But you know all that, of course." The whore is shocked: "A Papa talking about his son! No animal would talk about their own son that way"—but then she is not part of the family. Members of the Hellman family talk consistently in this fashion, whether animals do or not.

"I know as little about the nature of romantic love as I knew when I was eighteen," Lillian Hellman once wrote, "but I do know about the deep pleasure of continuing interest, the excitement of wanting to know what somebody else thinks, will do, will not do, the tricks played and unplayed, the short cord that the years make into rope. . . ." The words come from her brief, touching memorial to her long association with Dashiell Hammett, but their relevance is clear to her kind of family theater, including its freedom from love, its excitement, and its deep pleasures.

For family theater it is, all of it. The plays do not give back exactly the Lillian Hellman of reputation: the public figure on the far Left, who went to Spain and Russia, who spoke out early and bravely against fascism, who was a near-casualty of the McCarthy era. Large public themes do of course march across the surface of her plays in step with the times: society's persecution of lesbians (1934: *The Children's Hour*); class war and strike-breaking (1936: *Days to Come*); exploitation and corruption in the New South (1939: *The Little Foxes*); the fight against Nazism (1941: *Watch on the Rhine*); complicity of the rich liberal classes in the rise of world fascism (1944: *The Searching Wind*); more and worse on the New South (1947: *Another Part of the Forest*). Only in the two plays of the 1950's, in some ways the most interesting of all (*The Autumn Garden*, 1951, and *Toys in the Attic*, 1960), is the raw stuff of family melodrama allowed to stand alone, without public trappings; and Hellman's melodrama is, I think, the best thing in her plays because it is genuine and personal. The public matter, though given with sincerity, intelligence, and often eloquence, sometimes seems put on for the people out front.

A case in point is her first play, according to the information provided by Richard Moody, who has written a blandly appreciative but also occasionally illuminating study of Lillian Hellman as playwright. Moody tells us that its lesbian theme, which made a hit with the public, was lifted from a book of old crime stories, as were most of the surface details of its plot. In *The Children's Hour*, two young unmarried women, friends from college, are running a New England boarding school, which is destroyed by the dowager grandmother of one of their pupils, who spreads the rumor that they are lesbians. In the real-life case, the school was in Edinburgh, the time 1810, the grandmother a titled Scottish lady, the pupil her illegitimate granddaughter. That is perhaps why the New England setting in the play is unconvincing, the spinsters seem unlikely graduates of a Vassar or a Wellesley, the school seems more of a family business than an educational establishment, and the lesbian question is left full of puzzling ambiguities—apparently less from the playwright's lack of courage than from her lack of interest. One suspects that it was with relief that, when adapting the play for Hollywood, she made the sexual drama revolve instead about two women's squabble over one man, for this, not perversion, is true Hellman territory.

What is very real, and remains powerful in *The Children's Hour*, is the claustrophobic interior, where a nest of viper-like women, ranging from little girls to old ladies, are twisted together in perpetually venomous hostility. The two spinsters are clearly tied to

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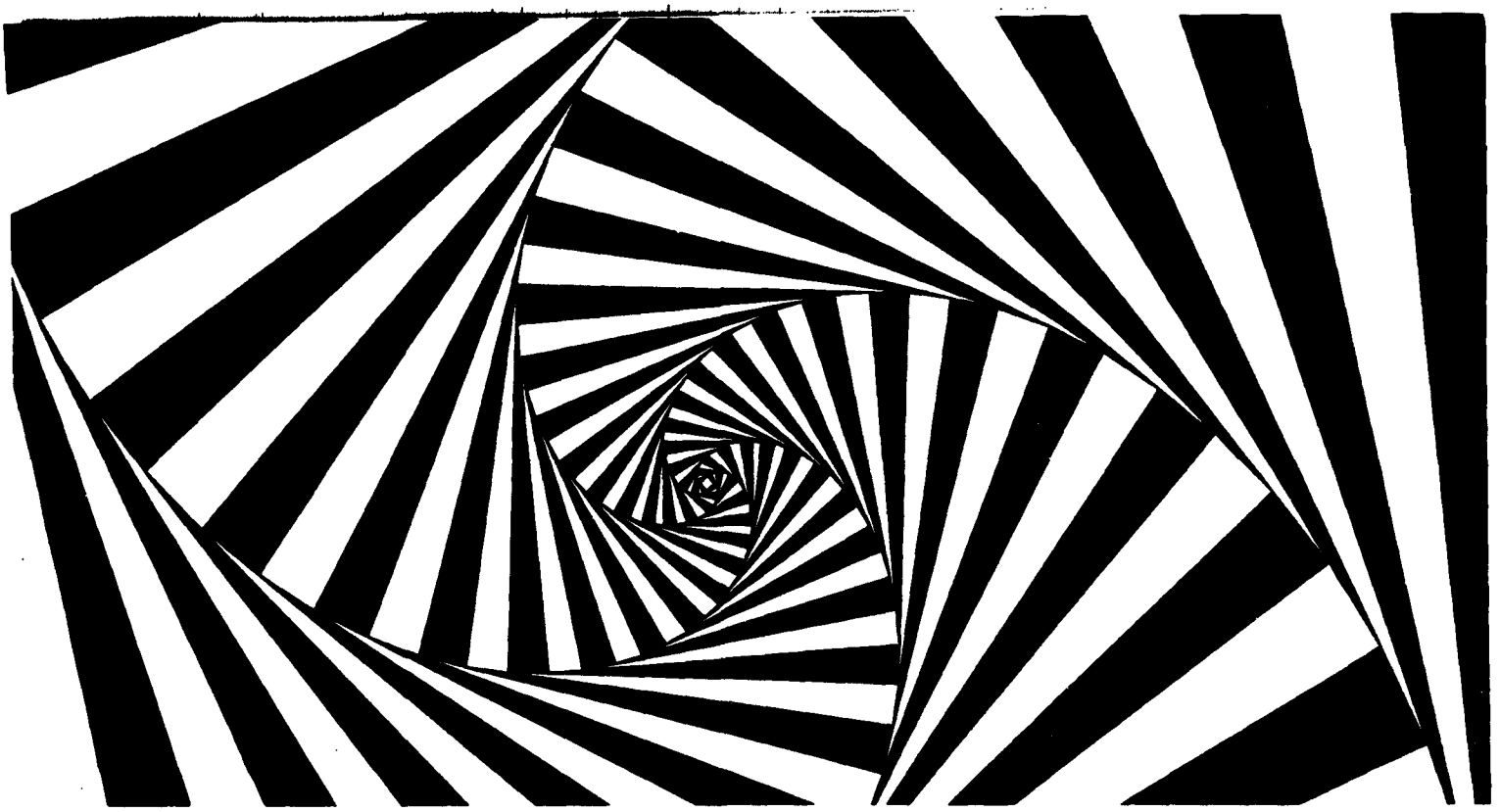

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each other for life, more like cousins than sorority sisters, and much like the pair of women in *The Searching Wind*, also tied together in mysterious rivalry for life, also fighting forever over one man. So too the mad bride in *Toys in the Attic* struggles with an invisible woman on the telephone over the body of her husband. Their relationship goes way back into incredibly complicated family history: the bride's mother has a colored "fancy man" (sinister enough to be a husband) who is the cousin of the light-skinned lady on the phone, a woman whose role in the play is to provide access to capital. Miscegenation, in Hellman's theater, may confuse but it hardly softens the bind of family. Perhaps what attracted Hellman originally to the Edinburgh case behind *The Children's Hour* was the sensation of race, not of perversion, for the marvelously horrid little girl, whose malevolence is never adequately explained in the play, was in history a "black" child fathered in India by the dowager's dead son. The battle between granddaughter and grandmother —the real, raw meat of Hellman's play—had been played out in reality across the color bar.

MOST of Lillian Hellman's plays are set in the Deep South, in or near New Orleans, where she was born and, half of each childhood year, also raised. But her attempts to pull the outside world of Southern history into the domestic orbit of her plays, often through careful research into period and economic fact, do not for me add up to much. Far more convincing is the reality of her standard interior—the huge, overfurnished living room, the looming stairs, the eavesdropping verandah—which may be authentically Southern. Its disorder and dirt, its unscheduled meals, its slovenly and shrieking women, its rude servants, its blatant but pointless housekeeping were the kind of thing that astonished and offended New England women who visited the South in the days of slavery. No playwright, surely, ever trailed so many mops and pails across the center of her stage, or gave so many pointless housekeeping chores to mistresses and servants, white and black, equally incompetent.

Hellman's blacks have on the whole worn well, because she treats them as members of the family—no sentimental compliment. A servant's occasional eccentric capacity for simple loyalty and affection seems evidence not so much of his being unrelated as of his being cut off, temporarily, from the scramble for capital. "A nigger woman in a white man's will!" exclaims Addie to Horace. "I'd never get it nohow."

According to Richard Moody, who has much to say of interest about the revisions as well as the sources of Hellman's plays, *The Little Foxes* was originally meant to be much more publicly race-conscious, in a 1930's style. Black Addie was to have had a smart daughter, Charlotte, a student at Tuskegee, who was to denounce the Hubbards for their efforts to exploit the proletariat—a character wisely cut from the final version of this still powerful drama of family life. It is interesting to learn, however, that Charlotte and Addie were also to be drawn even more closely into the family circle through suggestions of a sexual relationship between Horace and the girl. Incest and miscegenation, in Hellman's theater, are normal family matters rather than public issues.

Her women characters are justly celebrated, and one can see, reading the plays, why her tough dowagers and crackbrained wives inspired sensational performances from Tallulah Bankhead, Bette Davis, Cornelia Otis Skinner, Florence Eldridge, Patricia Neal, Mady Christians, Irene Worth. But her male characters are also worth a good actor's time (Paul Lukas, Leo Genn, Jason Robards, Jr., Montgomery Clift, and Frederic March played some of the parts). The men of the family are oversexed when it comes to whoring, but given to impotence and separate bedrooms at home, after the requisite heir has been produced. Next to the women, the men seem weak and somewhat foolish, but they can turn nasty, and even the gentlest of them shows a remarkable capacity to hold on to capital. Regina's husband, for example, mild and ailing Horace, I remembered from the movie version of *The Little Foxes* as the noble-minded victim of a den of Hubbards (I can still see the fine-chiseled features, and hear the low, cultivated voice of Herbert Marshall). But Horace surprised me, reading the play, as a man who has his fancy women offstage (a detail of character which Hellman was urged to but refused to eliminate from the play) and eighty-eight-thousand-dollars worth of Union Pacific bonds in a safe-deposit box. Why? Certainly never for the spending.

In *Another Part of the Forest*, Hellman returned to the Hubbard family to explain that their money came from Civil War profiteering and their worst character traits from the family patriarch, Marcus Hubbard, who, in intellect, suavity, and meanness seems a match for anyone. Marcus pays his sons Ben and Oscar poverty-line wages to work full-time in his interest, aims to keep his sexy unmarried daughter Regina full-time at home, and does keep forty thousand dollars in an envelope for fifteen years: in the well-house during the War, in the left-hand desk drawer during Reconstruction. But, says his wife Lavinia, when the horde is unearthed in Act III, "Same old envelope. Like I said, I used to dream about tearing up that money." Lavinia is of course quite mad; no one in these plays tears up money. The envelope passes into the hands of Ben Hubbard, successor to Marcus as family ruler.

There is no reason for money to be mentioned at all, no less handled and hoarded, in *Watch on the Rhine*. Yet Kurt Müller, the anti-Nazi hero, comes first onstage and walks off in the last act with a locked briefcase containing twenty-three thousand dollars. The money is earmarked for public purposes ("it has been gathered from the pennies of the poor who do not like Fascism"): that is ostensibly why it cannot be spent. But it is a Hellman touch, a highly effective one in this play, to establish virility through frugality. Müller is more than ever a

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hero when he lets his children go hungry while carrying about a small fortune under lock and key.

Toys in the Attic, produced in 1960, is in some ways the most frightening of Hellman's plays because it centers on an orgy of spending. The curtain rises on two middle-aged spinster sisters in an old New Orleans house. They talk of Papa and Mama, dead these twenty years, of the stringencies of their present shabby existence, of their dreams of a luxurious future, dreams which cannot be realized because of the demands of a ne'er-do-well brother who, though married and moved away, remains the center of their lives. Elsewhere, in other theaters, the atmosphere would be nostalgic, poignant, wistful, perhaps a little mad, but this is of course the Hellman family again. Carrie unbuttons her blouse and totes potted plants, Anna wields a mop and a dustrag, and the girls prove to be as tough as they are messy. They dislike each other thoroughly (and their old house and dead parents too) and their talk quickly moves onto the familiar level of raspy abrasiveness—the rub of the short tight cord of Hellman family feeling.

The sisters are not so poor that they cannot keep up the one essential indulgence: saving. There is "twenty-eight hundred and forty-three dollars" in the bank book which Anna brandishes center stage, along with the mop and the rag. And the sisters are game for another round in the perpetual love-hate battle with brother Julian, who comes home unexpectedly with his crazy young bride, under mysterious circumstances which suggest that once again he will be made to writhe and whimper under the bankbook's lash. But the twist in this play, the saving turn of Hellman melodrama, prepares a grotesquerie which reads somewhat too gamy for the present generation of theatergoers (who think nudity the only obscenity): it is that Julian has somehow become rich without help of the family and turned into a big spender.

Julian comes home laden with packages of furs and finery, envelopes of money, paid-off mortgages, tickets to Europe, a diamond ring, a piano, a new icebox, cases of champagne and caviar. It is a disgusting display: we are disgusted, the women and servants on stage are disgusted. These forbidden extravagances are the most dangerous "toys in the attic" which come spilling out through the course of Hellman's most Freudian play. Nothing that comes later—not the pantings of bridal lust or the embarrassments of impotence, not the revelations of incestuous desire and interracial coupling—can match it for sheer nausea. The first-act curtain falls as Julian, forcibly feeding his sister caviar, bursts into laughter.

> CARRIE. You're laughing at me. You've never laughed at me before. [*She rises, shrilly*] You're laughing at me.
>
> JULIAN. No, I wasn't. I'm just happy. I'm giving a party—

Family life, in the Hellman theater, is no party; and money is nothing to laugh about.

MONEY is power, passed on with a maximum of struggle from generation to generation, as if these middle-class families were in fact royal houses. The dynastic seriousness with which they take the struggle is rather grand, and just a bit funny. "Yes," says old Mrs. Ellis to a younger woman, "old people are often harsh when they control the purse. You'll see, when your days comes. And then, too, one comes to be bored with those who fool themselves. I say to myself, one should have power, or give it over. But if one keeps it, it might as well be used, with as little mealymouthness as possible. Go up now, press him hard, do it straight." This is the kind of autumnal wisdom that grandparents are always passing on to young folks in the Hellman theater, even as here in *The Autumn Garden,* a consciously muted late play.

Hellman people are not pleasant, and don't want to be, but most of the harm they do is to one another, and none of it seems meant to kill. The last-act curtain leaves us with the satisfying conviction that it will someday rise again on new little foxes grown up to be bigger and sharper-toothed than the old. And just as there is no tomfoolery about romantic love in these plays, which get along very nicely on hatred, so there is no nonsense about fate, God's will, the human condition, the state of society, etc., etc. The Hellman theater should remind us of O'Neill's family dramas, and her interiors of Mauriac's provincial hells, with which there is much on the surface in common, but it never does; for religion in the Hellman world is something just for crackpots, and her people are not sinners, just relatives.

From the point of view of the theater, the least attractive qualities of the Hellman people are their claustrophobic clannishness and their arrogant assumption that the great battles of the outside world are secondary to, but distantly dependent on, their family squabbles. But there is a kind of dash to all of them, a style to their meanness, a crackle to their lines which actors have always appreciated and audiences will go on relishing, I imagine, for some time to come. And one comes away from the plays convinced that, for all their excesses and limitations, the Hellman people are members of a real family, whose existence the skeptical reader can find substantiated in the reminiscent writings of Gertrude Stein, Sybille Bedford, Barbara Probst Solomon, and, of course, Lillian Hellman.

As to the fight for money-power that animates all of them, it is neither nice nor wholesome, but at least it keeps the mind (and the play) off cosmic aches and pains. As Lavinia says, pleading vainly for charity from her husband, "It's pig mean, being poor. Takes away your dignity." "That's correct, Lavinia," replies Marcus Hubbard, father of all the little foxes. "And a good reason for staying rich."

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